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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

OCTOBER
1929

EDITED BY
LEONARD HUXLEY



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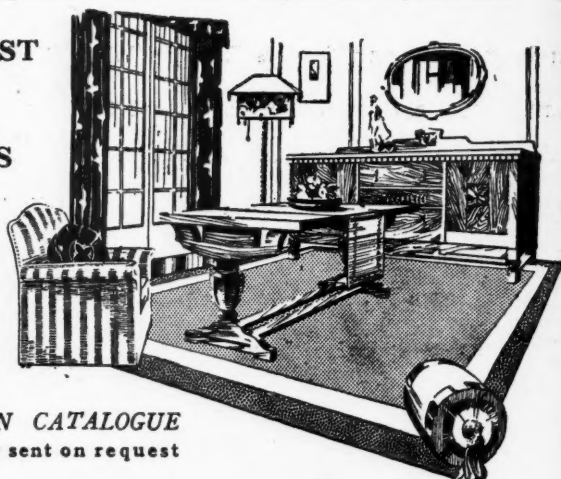


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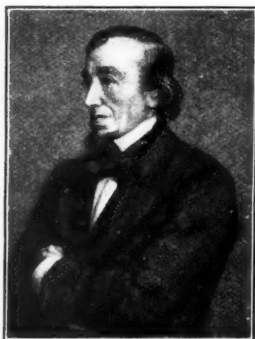
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ON SOLWAY BRIDGE.

BY G. E. MITTON.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SOMETHING under an hour later Bede walked into the drawing-room, where Ina and Loosha were waiting his coming for tea, which was already there.

'Where in the world have you been?' Loosha cried on seeing him.

'I came from the study.'

'Then you didn't, for I went there to look.'

Both the women regarded him curiously, noting some unaccountable change in him.

'Mr. Earlstoun left a long time ago,' said Ina at last.

'It must have been about an hour,' he answered, looking at his wrist watch. 'I went to the shrubbery to think things over, and I must have turned giddy or fainted, for I found myself lying by the path.'

'Bede!' exclaimed Ina, horrified. 'You have been doing too much! You must go to bed directly after tea.'

'What did you walk in the shrubbery alone for?' asked Loosha, piqued. 'Here have I been waiting for you such a time.'

'I'm all right, Ina. Sorry, Loosha.' He sat down, and they talked on casual topics while tea lasted. Ina was uneasy, she did not like the pallor which had spread over his face; she did not like his queer manner, but she could not do anything, and went out with the tea-things. It was Loosha's right, not hers, to see to all this.

The instant they were alone, Loosha clutched Bede's arm. 'Has it all gone wrong?' she demanded almost fiercely.

'How?'

'The old lawyer man—does he say that the property does not belong to you?'

'No, no, he said nothing of the sort.'

'What do you look like that for, then?'

'I suppose I'm tired. I feel queer. I really think I shall have to go to bed or to lie down before dinner.'

'I will not stand any more for all this jobbery,' Loosha exclaimed suddenly. 'You think I don't see anything, but I do. You and she planned it. I am to go back to that old rectory, and you and she are alone the whole evening. It is not the most proper thing; when nurse goes, it will be all of a scandal in the village.'

'I didn't think nurse was supposed to be so efficient a chaperon,' he said, smiling. 'But what do you propose to do about it?'

'She is going to-morrow, and I propose to come back here, and stop, whether you make a mock of me or not.'

'Sorry, Loosha. I wasn't mocking, really. You are quite right. You must come here, of course. I will fix it up.'

'To-night?'

'Nurse is here until to-morrow,' he assured her gravely, but with a twist of the lip she had not seen before.

'Now you *are* mocking!' She stamped.

'On my honour I'm not. I would see you home, but I feel so giddy.' He sat down abruptly on a chair as he spoke. She looked at him searchingly, and was mollified, seeing how ill he seemed.

'Very well, I will go now. When will you fetch me?'

'I'll get a message to the Makowers to-night, that would only be civil, but it will have to be to-morrow afternoon before I can fetch you. I've a lot of estate business to fix up in the morning.'

When she had gone he made his way upstairs, and met Ina coming down.

'I'm sure you are worse, Bede,' she said, stopping, gravely concerned. 'You ought not to have attempted to see Mr. Earlston yet.'

'I am a bit groggy; it came over me suddenly. I've done so little lately. I'll be all right after a rest. Ina, do you mind if Loosha comes here to stay to-morrow?'

'Of course I don't mind. I would have suggested it, if—if I hadn't been a coward.' The last words were spoken very low.

Bede steadied himself by the balusters. 'I said I'd let the Makowers know.'

'I'll fix all that.'

'Will you, Ina? Bless you and thank you.'

He got himself upstairs somehow. He was so much exhausted that he agreed when the nurse, who had supposed herself to have

been practically finished with her patient, came up in a great state, and insisted he should undress and have his dinner sent up.

After dinner Perdita perched on his bed and read to him, and he felt much better. His mind was in a quiet, stupefied state, and he fell asleep early.

The next morning when he woke he felt as well as he had been the day before, and insisted on getting up immediately after breakfast. He spent the morning in the study interviewing various men about their departments in connection with the estate, and settling accounts and wages with the money Mr. Earlston had left with him for the purpose. He seemed like himself at lunch, and after a siesta in the study armchair went to fetch Loosha and her luggage.

His manner to the Makowers was perhaps a little more formal than usual, and Mrs. Makower, with less penetration than usually distinguished her, asked her husband afterwards if he thought that Bede had changed with the alteration in his position. Mr. Makower, who had more knowledge of men than his wife, scoffed at such an idea.

Bede put his arm round Loosha in the car, but said very little, as it was not certain how much Gibson could overhear. It was not until tea was over, and they went together into the study, that he made a serious attempt to explain his purpose to her.

'Come here, Loosha,' he began, and she came over and sat on the sofa beside him. He lit a cigarette for her and one for himself, and chose his words carefully.

'I have something very important to tell you,' said he. 'I have made up my mind to let Ina live here in the house undisturbed, and as for you and me, we must make the best we can of it.'

'You said something like that before. I only thought it silly.'

Bede looked at Loosha with a sad seriousness; would she be capable of assimilating his ideas? If not, what was to happen?

'What I said before was not quite the same thing,' he explained. 'I suggested at first that Ina and the children should stay on here, rent free, but living on their own income. Now I find there is no money for them except a pittance, so I am proposing that their position should remain unchanged, and Ina should receive the rental of the estate for the present, and carry on here.'

'I don't believe it. You have a crack in your head.'

'It is true I had a crack in my head, but it is mended now. I am quite serious.'

'You truly think, then, that Ina would condescend to such an arrangement?'

He was dumbfounded. What an ass he had been! Of course she would not. Yet it had taken a woman to tell him so.

But the pause was not long. 'If she will not, then there is only one other way. I must make the whole estate over to her for her lifetime legally. Poor little Loosha! it's hard on you and it's difficult to make you understand. We must talk it over in all possible ways until you see it as I do. There is no hurry. Mr. Earlston is not coming back for a week.'

'It makes me very unhappy when you say such daft things.'

'Why? Because you think I am mad?'

'No. Because you would not say them if you were not in love with her.'

'That is nonsense if you like. I am not in love with anyone but you. Besides, Ina is my sister-in-law.'

'You could not marry her, then?'

'I could; for the law now allows a man to marry his deceased brother's widow, but I have no wish to do so.'

'If you are not in love with her, why do you speak in this mad way?'

'I expect I shall have to tell you the whole story, Loosha, before we've done, and in any case there is a fact I must begin with, which I should have told you anyhow before we married.'

'What is that?'

'I have been married before.'

'Ah! Once I thought that, when we were all on the Holy Island; but afterwards I think, no, he has not the all-knowing look of a man who has been married.'

Bede smiled very sadly. 'You are very shrewd, my Loosha. I was married, and yet not quite a married man. I had no domestic life. I was very young at the time it happened. By the way, how old are you?'

'Never you mind, Mr. Rudeness, get on with your story.'

'I was an undergraduate at Oxford. You know what that means?'

'But of course.'

'My wife was much older than I, and not what you would call *hochwohlgeboren*. I soon found out that we were badly mated, she as well as I; so we never lived together, and after a while she died.'

'How many years?'

'Half a dozen.'

'And you had no children?'

'Thank God, no.'

'Then I do not mind at all. It is what all men do, only they do not call it marrying. What has that to do with this mad scheme of yours?'

'It has something.'

'Tell me then.'

'I do not know how to tell you. I have never told anyone. It lies as deep in me as the marrow in my bones, and is as real to me.'

'Get on, then; you say yourself that I am shrewd.'

When she was like this, child-like and companionable, he felt her caressing affection as something dearer and more intimate than anything he had ever known.

'Very well, I will try, but we may have to break off and go on to-morrow.'

She snuggled more closely into the shelter of his arm.

'Two years ago I was desperately miserable; lonely and wretched. My wife was alive and I was getting only three pounds a week, out of which I sent her one.'

'But didn't your father leave you anything?'

'Yes. He had left me money, but I had spent it all, and more than that, I had got into debt. Like a young fool I ran amuck, and thought the money would last for ever.'

'But you got some more from your relation not so long back?'

'I used most of that to pay my debts.'

'Then you were still in debt? I did not know that. What a pity!'

On the subject of money her mind was keen and quick; she questioned after it as a hound on a trail. He did not enlighten her as to the nature of that transaction, as it was irrelevant.

'I was so poor and wretched that I hardly cared what I did. When my turn for a holiday came, I went to a place on the Solway, right across England from here, on the west coast. I felt if I could only look at the sea and see the birds, it would be refreshing. I had not seen my brother for years, not since his marriage, and I had got it firmly into my head that it was his wife Ina that came between us. Of course I know now that I was wrong, and that he would not see me because of my own idiotic folly, and quite rightly too.'

'He was angry perhaps at having a sister-in-law not quite so high-born?' Loosha suggested.

'He did not know of that.'

'Nor she?'

'No. How should she?'

'Then I know now something about you which she does not know,' she remarked in a satisfied tone. 'Go on.'

'This place I was staying at is called Bowness-on-Solway. A bridge a mile long runs across the estuary. It was used for a railway, but no trains run there now, and people are not in fact supposed to go on to it. It is all rusted and gaping. But I made my way half across, and stood there staring down at the grey water, and in my unhappiness I thought of all the people who had made my life wretched, and kept me down from getting into any better position.'

'And wished them dead? I have done that too—my step-mother—'

How was it possible to make her understand his wild, weird story? Yet it was her due. She *must* know, or she could not but think him insane in his project of reparation.

'Yes, I wished them dead. I stood there and pictured them coming on to the bridge in a procession out of the mist. Ina—'

'Ina!' She sat up with a shriek of delight and clapped her hands together. 'Oh, la, la! But you do not wish it now?'

He summoned up all his patience. 'No, I do not wish it now.'

As she said no more, he proceeded: 'My wife.'

She nodded comprehendingly.

'An old man, who is the head clerk where I work. He came between me and the chief, and never let me get a chance.

'Then my cousin Robert—who I thought might leave me money.

'I watched the grey water intently, and as it poured under the bridge I felt I was being swept away with it to somewhere that isn't a part of this earth as we know it. In that strange region I was drawn toward something which I longed for; it attracted me exceedingly, and I knew I ought to resist; yes, even then I knew, and I struggled feebly to get up and out again, but really I let myself go.

'They were all to be mine, those faces which swam around me, and grew monstrous, and were seen horribly beneath a wavering screen of water. They were given to me if I let myself slide into the power of the Evil One and became his for ever.

'I did not see it all clear-cut like this then ; the full meaning of that dreadful vision only grew on me gradually afterwards, but I *did* know I ought to have struggled harder than I did.

'I did not resist at all really, I just slid forward and made little feeble pretences of resistance to salve my manhood.

'Then I came round and found myself standing on the bridge still, as if nothing had happened.'

'It's like Faust,' said Ina. 'You sold yourself to the Devil ; but that's only a tale, it's not true.'

'Ah, Loosha !' He pressed his face into her neck as if the human contact would help him in his extremity. 'That's what I told myself time after time. But I know that it *is* true. I have sold my soul, and have been paid the price.'

'Do you believe all that ?' Her matter-of-factness came down into the middle of his highly wrought thought as a spoonful of cold water goes into boiling coffee. It settled the grounds of fantasy and made him wonder if he really did believe it.

Then he remembered.

'I haven't finished my story. I have proof. Now listen very attentively. Within a year my wife was dead. She was a young woman in the early thirties and did not ail anything. She went to stay at the seaside with a friend ; ate some shell-fish, and immediately after went for a sail in a boat. She was taken with violent internal pains and was dead before next day.'

'She wasn't drowned,' was Loosha's comment.

'No, she wasn't drowned, but at the inquest they said that she might have still been alive if she hadn't gone out on a choppy sea after eating the shell-fish. So the sea had something to do with it.'

'And the next ?'

'My cousin Robert, an old man, went fishing in his punt on the Thames early in the year. A violent thunderstorm came on and half-filled the punt with water. It sank lower and lower, and the old man slipped somehow and was just wallowing in the water. He was soaked. A passing launch took him and his nurse attendant off, and carried them home. He died two days later.'

'Well, he wasn't drowned either, and it wasn't the sea.'

'No, but it was by the agency of water that he met his death. Except for that diabolical fact I could never have believed in this frightful thing.'

'And the next—the old clerk ?'

'He's alive still, so far as I know.'

'Then I say—pouf—figs and dates for your devil, Mr. Faust!'

'But Loosha—wait—what about my brother?'

'Your brother? *He* wasn't on the bridge.'

'No, but Ina was.'

'How can that be the same?'

He repeated to her the words of the lawyer, graven on his mind as if branded with fire.

She was silent for a moment considering them, as she was by no means deficient in brains of a quick, superficial kind. She gathered the inference at once.

'So you think because he died like that, as if it was *her*, and she was on your rotten old bridge, that you are his murderer and must give her all your money? Well, I never did——' She stretched out her long, thin arms.

'It's not a laughing matter, Loosha, it's the grimmest fact.'

'I'm glad you told me all that stuff.'

'Why?'

'Because now I know it's about nothing at all. Besides, even supposing it was true, that you've sold your soul to hell, then you must make the best of your time here.'

'Do you or don't you believe in a hereafter?'

'Of course I believe. I am a Christian. I am quite shocked at you.'

'But you speak so lightly of what may happen hereafter.'

'No, not lightly, but it's so far away.'

'I had hoped you'd understand, Loosha.'

'Now I've made you understand instead. You silly old thing! The maggots mustn't eat your head any more.'

'You think I should not give up the income of the estate?'

'Think!' She snorted. 'How can one think anything so silly? You yourself do not now any more believe in that rubbish.'

'But I do.'

'Then I will not marry you.'

They were both standing up, and rather tense. Bede controlled himself. 'We needn't be so final now. Say nothing to anyone, and we will talk again to-morrow. There's only just time for us to get ready for dinner now.'

There was a fearful row in the hall next morning. Some trifle started it. Perdita went off like a bundle of squibs, stamping and dancing with rage; her face distorted, her voice shrill.

'I won't do it; I won't. I'll kill you all.'

Ina made no attempt to control or pacify her; she stood silently by, looking at her, and no doubt that would have had a calming effect in time had not Loosha come out of the dining-room and smiled one of her smooth smiles.

Perdita thereupon dashed out of the house and down the garden. Bede, with hazy recollections of just such screaming rages in his own childhood, due to overwrought nerves, pursued her, and finding she had climbed up into one of the beech trees overhanging the field, climbed up after her, catching her by the ankle in a friendly way. She surrendered and came lower down, perching in the crook of the bough just above him.

'What's all the row about?' he asked casually.

'I can't tell you. I just go off boiling sometimes; my brain boils up and up like milk, until it froths over at the top of my head.'

'That is rather terrifying.'

'Oh not to you! Never to you. I am furious against the world, but you are safe inside—with myself. It can't touch *you*.'

'But I don't like you to storm and rage around. What's the trouble?'

'It's all so miserr-uble.' Her face worked. 'I had just found you, and you'll be miserr-uble too,' was all she could explain, before Loosha's clear voice was heard calling 'Bede' as she came down the shrubbery.

Perdita was down the tree, along the fence, and up another, with the quickness of a squirrel, and Bede climbed down, dusting his trouser legs, to meet Loosha.

'I have something to say to you,' she began, catching at his arm and ignoring the subject of Perdita.

'You are not going to say again that you won't marry me?'

'No, not that. Something the other way. If we are to marry soon I must have a trousseau. I have no clothes at all.'

'Certainly you must have a trousseau. Where can you get one?'

'I could manage in Newcastle; Fenwick's is a good shop, and there are others.'

'But it's Good Friday to-morrow, and you can't do any shopping until at least Tuesday.'

'What a pity! I had forgotten that. But I can go on Tuesday.'

'How much money will you want?'

'A hundred pounds.'

He whistled. 'I haven't got it just now. Mr. Hanaper sent me forty yesterday, but I need that. I'll tell you what I can do,

though, I can give you a note to Mr. Earlston—or stay, he is coming here on Tuesday. Can you wait one day more, and he will bring you some money if I ask him? I can pay him back any time.'

'If I must wait, I must, but it is a pity,' she said ungraciously.

'This means that you agree to all that I said, Loosha?' he asked in a low voice.

'We shall never agree about that,' she said pettishly, 'but I can't stop you if you will be mad.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

SOME time before this Bede had told Ina about his strange experience with old Matilda, and about her ringworm cure, and the hour-glass, which, after her death, he had made over to Mr. Hatherton for safe keeping. In the first week of his convalescence she had come to seek him with that rather shame-faced smile we put on when we think that what we are going to say will sound silly, and told him there had been a little outbreak of ringworm among the school children in the village. It was now the Easter holiday and the school was closed, so it was hoped the disease would not spread, but if he cared to exercise his newly acquired powers on two little sisters in their home she would support him.

It required some courage, because to them both the whole notion seemed ridiculous and a survival of witchcraft, and they had some trouble in explaining to the good-humoured mother of the children what it was they proposed to do. Bede spoke of it as a 'remedy,' given to him by a friend. He took the children off into a room by himself, two flaxen-haired docile little girls, and followed Matilda's instructions. It involved touching the nasty sore, and he was glad when it was over, and he could wash his hands in disinfectant.

Now, on the afternoon of the day he had had his decisive talk with Loosha as to her trousseau, Ina proposed they should go to see how the children were.

The miraculous had happened. Mrs. Hauxwell, the mother, was profuse in her thanks and loud in her wonder. The ringworm had almost vanished, while little Mary Bamlett, who had not been operated on, was as bad as ever. Bede felt compelled to seek her

out also and use his powers on her, then he returned to the house. He hardly spoke when he was addressed, but he felt all the time that Ina was watching him and sharing to some extent his stupefaction at this confirmation of the cure. She, however, could not know all that it contained for himself. It was a finger-post, small but unmistakable, of the direction in which he was heading.

The situation had become for him so threatening, so full of awful menace, that he began to doubt whether he ought after all to marry Loosha, even though she were willing. The urgent need to get right away by himself and face the facts possessed him, and that night when Ina and Loosha had gone upstairs to bed he went out by himself, took the small car out of the garage, and ran to the little church which stood behind the village on the green stretch sloping to the sea.

Here he stopped the car, and passing the church, went over to the broken wall on the far side in the full light of the glorious Paschal moon. There were a few drifting clouds amid which she sailed, riding them as a seagull rides the waves, ever progressing and yet appearing to remain stationary.

The graves of his father, mother and brother were close to him, the last still mounded and unsightly. Over all the scene there was a solemn glory, awe-inspiring and thrilling, which brought vividly before him Böcklin's famous picture the *Isle of the Dead*. Bede felt to-night the deep solemnity, touched by quivers of thrilling hope, with which that picture must inspire anyone who looks at it.

In the widespread surges of the sea he found some counterpart of his own tempestuous and unsettled mood; in the deadly quiet of the graves lying before the solid stone church he felt the untouchable depths of eternity.

Yet only to-day one had spoken to him from the grave. Matilda, though dead, had stretched out a warning finger, pointing to the 'power' she had left with him as a proof that she had spoken truth. He saw and believed; he believed in these manifestations of a world untouched by the body, and he believed, therefore, that he was drifting toward horror unimaginable. Was there no way out? Could he not save himself? If not, salvation could come through none other.

He sat on the irregular wall in the light of the moon, now sheeny and now striking, and while he sat he felt as if inspiration

were flowing into him from some unknown quarter. Dawn was breaking over his future, though he knew not whence. Holding himself rigid, lest by his movement he should dispel the gradual illumination and find it but an illusion, he waited, and the light within grew stronger, until with sudden irradiation, he saw the way of escape. It was the way of renunciation !

Because of that unholy compact on the bridge he had received position, money and a place in the world. Stumbling-blocks had been cut away from his feet, and the lives of others scattered like chaff out of his way. The only path by which he could rid himself of the incurred cost was by ridding himself of the price which had been paid into his hand.

He must renounce in its entirety the property which he had gained. He saw now with a clarity which made him marvel at his previous obtuseness, that he must give up the whole thing. How could he for one moment have supposed that Ina would continue to live under an obligation to him for the very roof that sheltered her ? How could he legally retain the property with one hand while making the grand gesture with the other ?

Ina would, of course, in no case accept it from him, but she would have no right to refuse it for her child. A deed of gift, making over Dalness, and all that it involved, to Perdita, was the only way of escape.

Bede's face was very white in the moonlight, and the strings of his heart were tightly drawn. Some drops of moisture wrung from the agony of mind appeared on his forehead. To do what he now contemplated was no easy task. It meant renouncing everything, not for a few years, but for ever. He would have to face the fact that his own children—were he so blessed—would never grow up in those familiar walls, never run along the garden paths and over the grassy fields, knowing them as 'home.' The keen and intimate knowledge of every widened vista and every narrow peep registered on his brain would not be theirs. This to him was the supreme sacrifice. But as he sat there immovable, he took comfort again ; Perdita was as dear to him as his own child could be, and Perdita loved the place even as he did. It was to no stranger he would be passing it on. And in that thought he found salvation.

The two who had ever been subtly in antagonism now hung on opposite sides of the balance. The thought of Loosha made him shudder, for he well knew that in her voice would speak the opinion

of all those to whom no inner vision is vouchsafed. For the rest of his life the concession of Dalness would be used as a stick to beat him with in all disagreements. To her, as well as to the greater number, he would by this act seal himself a fool.

Perdita on the one side, Loosha on the other.

His mind shifted, layer over layer, moving and changing as the currents of ocean change and show gloomy depths and unexpected coloured lights. He knew now that his mind was made up, even before he moved at last, and stared straight at the sea, cloven in twain by the wide glittering pathway made by the steadily rising moon. Light and not darkness beckoned him onward from the sea this time. How contrasted was this pathway of glory with that turbulent flood that had run beneath his feet that day on Solway Bridge! What a contrast that pure white light from the murky orange glare over Criffel then!

He was able now to review steadily all that had led him to his present position.

Did he believe in the actuality of his Vision? He did; yet, as he had never told anyone about it except Loosha, who was wholly sceptical, it was non-existent to the rest of the world.

He could not but believe. It stood out on a different plane from anything that had ever happened to him in his life. He could only suppose that his evil thought, willing the death of his fellow creatures, had somehow happened in a peculiarly opportune moment for the forces of Evil. It was as though for the moment he had created a vacuum by the absence of 'good,' which had enabled those other forces to rush in and possess themselves of it, as in the old days evil spirits had possessed the vacant souls of men. There had been at that moment a favourable conjunction for the working of evil that might seldom or never happen again. Monstrous and obscure, but awfully real, it had dominated him.

Had the proofs been only the death of old Morris, who might have died from just such causes any time these ten years past; or even the death of the unwholesome Carrie, who lived an unhealthy life with over-gross eating and no exercise, he might still have thrust aside the terrible conviction, but when his own brother, a man in the prime of life, was swept away that the inheritance might be delivered into his hand, he could doubt no longer.

As he was convinced, so there could be no question that he must act. And as old Matilda had prophesied the power had been given him; it had come into him from outside. 'Power in this

life to rise high, above yourself.' That was what she had said, and it had been fulfilled.

Now that it had been fulfilled the course he was to follow seemed the simplest and most beautiful thing in the world. He had no longer any struggle—he was free. Waves of happiness flooded in upon him, happiness internal and unquenchable. In cloudless serenity his spirit soared into the blue spaces around. Times of doubt and stress would come; his purpose would be obscured; he would be wounded and scathed by derision and contempt as by vitriol, but to-night he knew pure joy and the utmost certitude.

The murky background of life, which had filled him with a haunting terror from which he had never been wholly free in these last years, was ripped from him, and he saw only light.

He was happy as he had never yet been. The existence of such happiness independently of circumstance is in itself proof of the existence of the soul.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. EARLSTON came, as he had promised, on Easter Tuesday, but before that happened a good deal had passed between Loosha and Bede on the question in dispute. She pitted herself against him with all the resources at her command. She cajoled, argued, threatened, besought him to give way. But she found quite a different man to deal with from any she had thus far known. It was a feature of Bede's development that it proceeded by steep steps rather than with slow, continuous growth. He was absolutely firm, and yet treated her with a patience he had not always shown.

He told her that on the main issue there could be no change; that he was resolved to make over the entire property to his niece, but he explained that he had an income from his work which would suffice to keep them both, besides the hundred a year from invested money. Mr. Hanaper had once been told that the elder brother's death could make no difference in the position of the younger one, and Bede had never undeceived him when he learned the truth himself. Therefore, when Cuthbert died, no question had arisen as to his ceasing to work for the firm.

Bede suggested to Loosha that after being married in London they should spend a week at some seaside place in the south, and

then return north to go on with his peregrinations in Scotland, before they finally settled into some small house in the south for the winter. He thought it would not be difficult to make temporary headquarters at such a place as Oban and work from there, coming and going during the summer months, thus being able always to have his week-ends with his wife.

Loosha assented, and seemed to grow milder under this firm treatment; by Easter Monday she stopped persecuting him with her endless repetitions, and was quite ready to spend a happy day with him and Podge. They took their lunch and went off inland in the car, for in this favoured spot there was no fear of every district being turned into a 'congested area' for the Bank holiday period, as in the neighbourhood of great towns.

Mr. Earlston arrived for luncheon on Tuesday, and the first words he said to his client afterwards, in the study when they were alone, were of the nature of an apology.

'When I was last here I was quite in the dark as to your reasons for the odd idea of giving up your inheritance to your brother's family. I know them now, and I think they do you great credit.'

'Indeed?' said Bede, with interest. 'What do you suppose them to be?'

'It is common talk that you believe your brother lost his life in saving yours; so that you think it only just not to let the widow and children suffer for it.'

'That is as good a reason as any other, is it not?' Bede asked with a radiant smile.

'But of course you have dropped the idea now; it was only on the impulse of the moment any notion so subversive of the very foundations of property could be seriously considered.'

'I have given up the particular notion that I explained to you when you were last here, but I have a parallel proposition to make which I fear you won't like any better. I am going to ask you to do whatever is necessary to make a trust deed settling the property on my niece Perdita.'

Mr. Earlston's round eyes opened as widely as he could make them. 'Then you have not given up the idea?'

'Not at all. In fact I am so decided in my course of action that I must ask you to take it at that, as an old friend, and say no more on the subject. I am sick of argument.'

'Do I understand you to say that you are going to hand over the whole property to Perdita, by deed of gift, just as it came to you?'

'You have it perfectly right, and as she is not yet ten years old it will have to be a trust. I suggest yourself and my sister-in-law as fit trustees.'

Mr. Earlston sat for some time assimilating this. 'In the whole course of my experience with the law, extending over many years, I have never come across anything like this,' he said at length.

'I daresay not; it is unique in my experience too,' Bede agreed, laughing.

'I think I had better leave you a further time for reflection,' suggested Mr. Earlston with indissoluble gravity.

'That will be of no use. The time you left me has been profitably employed in tightening up my resolution; I can't answer for what may happen if you leave me still more. I have now got my scheme cut and dried, and I want you to note down some points concerning it.'

'Does Mrs. Delaval know of this?'

'No; but when you have made out the trust deed, and I have done all the necessary signing under your directions, I shall want you to give it to her in person, as I shall not be here.'

'I will take down the points you wish by all means, but I have not given up my hope of persuading you to reconsider the matter.'

'Hope on, hope ever,' quoted Bede, cheerily tapping the paper-knife on the table. 'Before we begin with the really serious business, I should like to know if you brought me that hundred pounds I asked you for? I want to hand it over to Miss Melikoff for the delicate business of trousseau getting. As I explained in my letter, owing to her peculiar circumstances, she has no money of her own.'

Mr. Earlston produced various bundles of notes tied up and neatly docketed. He set them down separately. Among them was the money for the wages of the estate men and domestic servants, and a bundle of notes for Loosha. These he counted out before Bede, who at once made out a receipt, and stamped and signed it before handing it over.

'I will, of course, repay you this quite apart from the estate money. It is my personal debt, and you may have to wait for it, so I hope that won't trouble you,' he said as he blotted it.

When the instructions for the transfer of the property had been given in detail, Mr. Earlston asked if there were to be any tying-up of the property on Perdita's children, any proviso as to whether her husband—if any—should take her name, and mentioned various

other of the complications which lawyers hope will produce profit to their firms in the future.

‘Nothing at all,’ Bede replied. ‘She is to be absolutely free. No entail on Podge, and no husbands forced to swallow her name. She can come into it at twenty-one; it is a pity she must wait, for she has enough sense to run it now. She can leave it to whom she chooses. How do we know that she may not also be in the peculiar position of finding someone to whom she owes so great a debt that it is unpayable in any other way than by giving the whole ungrudgingly?’

Mr. Earlston did not know what to make of this, and left, shaking his head and feeling sure that in some obscure way his client’s reason was affected, though, apart from this idiosyncrasy, he seemed in the full possession of his senses.

Bede sprang joyfully through the study window, and went in the direction where he heard the children’s voices. He played a game with them, and then Loosha came out and joined him.

‘I have been making out a paper of all that I shall want,’ she said, showing him a long slip. ‘Have you got the money for me?’

It was always pure pleasure to Bede to give anybody anything. Therefore he produced the bundle of notes from his inner breast pocket rather glowingly. ‘Here you are! I’ve seen it counted before my eyes. It’s in tens, fives and some ones.’

Her face was sharp and eager; she gripped the money with a hand that shook with excitement. ‘Oh, but you are good!’ she exclaimed ecstatically. ‘Now I know that you do truly love me.’

‘Shall I come with you to Newcastle to-morrow?’

‘No, no, no!’ she exclaimed with decision. ‘Look you, how could you deal with such a paper as that?’ She waved her slip of items.

‘I certainly couldn’t.’

‘Then I should be worrying, with you waiting about outside for me, and this I mean to enjoy with my whole heart.’

‘All right, I won’t spoil it,’ he said, greatly relieved. Then he told her all that had been done, and that as soon as the short time necessary to fulfil the formalities was over, the deed of gift was to be presented to Ina on behalf of her child.

‘You are certainly much more determined than I ever thought,’ Loosha admitted. ‘Now I, in my turn, have something to tell

you. My name you know already is not Melikoff, that was just a Russian name of a girl I knew. My name is Polishky. My father lives at Brook Green in London and he is a musician. He plays in orchestras and sometimes at concerts by himself. He came to play in Newcastle this last winter, and Ina took me to hear him, and it was funny to sit there and see your own father, and he not knowing.'

This heartless statement was so unexpected that it took Bede a little time to get it in all its bearings. 'But if he lives in England, how was it you were in Poland?' he asked at length.

'How thick your head is! I have not been in Poland since I stopped being a schoolgirl in Switzerland.'

'Hum, that is rather complicated. I suppose you mean that you were born in Poland and lived there as a girl, going to school in Switzerland, and that when you left school all the family came to England?'

'That is it. We used to be quite rich, not what you think rich here, but rich for Poland, and my father lost a great deal of his money, and my mother—I told you she was English—persuaded him to go to England, where there are no native musicians, so that there is not so much of competition. He came and was naturalised.'

'That must have been before the War?'

'But of course.'

Bede did a rapid calculation in his head, which resulted in the estimate that Loosha must be some years over thirty; he had never supposed her more than twenty-four or twenty-five; however, that was not of any consequence, what was of consequence was the revelation of this strange story.

'Did you come with your father to England?'

'Why yes; what else could I do? I had no money. My mother was very fond of me; she died about two years ago, and immediately, mark you, he married again, a yellow-haired one he picked up at an orchestra. So I had to get away from them.'

'But how did it happen you were in Leith harbour? Was it not true about the steamer?'

'Oh, la, la! Of course it was true! How could I have descended from the wet and rainy skies? I went from England to Denmark in the usual way, with a little money I had left to me by my own mother. There indeed I did take passage on a boat, and so get back, so my own people would not trace me.'

He rubbed his hand over his hair in a puzzled way.

'But what about the bag? I say, that must have been true at least?' There was something of pleading in his voice.

'No, no. I did not drop any bag. But I put it in my case with my passport as a British subject, for if you had all insisted on seeing my papers then you would have known my story was not right.'

'But I can't see your object.'

'My object was to begin life again, and when I saw you, all at once it came into my mind I should be a princess, then I would perhaps get a chance to marry a rich Englishman; clever, wasn't it?'

'You are not going to marry a rich man, Loosha,' he said hoarsely, and for a moment the pure and untouchable joy which had been with him continuously since his night in the churchyard was replaced by an awful sensation of groping once again near the evil thing he loathed.

'What?' she cried in alarm, thrusting the notes she still held into a little handbag. 'You are not going to cast me off now, just because I have told you the truth?'

'No, no, I didn't mean that.'

They walked up and down in silence while he digested this amazing tale of complicated deceit.

'But if your name is not really Melikoff, how did Ina get that reference from the school in Switzerland?' he asked at last. 'Don't say that was forged!'

'Nothing so silly and dangerous as that. Much easier. An old school friend of mine is a teacher there now; it was her name I gave to Ina, not the name of the head; it was she who answered so satisfactorily. You see'—with a satisfied little wriggle—'I knew something about her that would not be at all pretty if it came out, and so she did all that I asked her to do. You can't catch me!'

He could not utter a word, or look at her, and was thankful to see Ina waving them in for tea.

The next day he drove his fiancée to the station, took a first-class ticket for her to Newcastle, listened to her while she explained that if by chance she was not in the five o'clock train he would understand she had been held up by the time it took to get so many things, and that he must meet the seven o'clock.

He stood in a profound study, watching the sinuous line of the brown train as it wound itself away down the curving lines. Just as he turned at last, Harry Hall dashed on to the platform.

'Missed it, by Jove! Bad luck! Had to stop and put on the spare wheel. Shall have to motor all the way to Newcastle now, and 'phone the mater that she can't have the car to-day.'

Bede had seen him more than once since the accident in the pit, and now asked news of the proceedings at Bickley. Harry gave a cheerful account; matters were progressing much more favourably than they had at first dared to hope. They would be able to commence working again within a reasonable time.

Just as Bede was going to start his own car, the other came close up to him, and said rather shamefacedly: 'I'm going to shake hands with you, Delaval; it's the only way I can express my feelings. I hear you're making over the property to your brother's children, as he met his death in saving your life. I—well, I can't tell you what I think of it! It's the most sporting thing I ever heard of.'

How did these things get about? Bede, surprised at finding sensibility in this wooden man, gave his hand willingly to the proffered grip, and murmured something about 'common justice.'

So that was to be the received version of his conduct? It certainly served to avert the stigma of a crank from his unlucky self!

Loosha did not turn up when he went to meet the five o'clock train; and when she did not come by the seven o'clock either, he surmised that she might have met Harry Hall in Newcastle and persuaded him to bring her home in his car.

As he reached the house Ina came forward with a telegram addressed to him in her hand. It was from York:

'Am going to my father, letter for you to-morrow. Love, LOOSHA.'

Neither he nor Ina could make out what it meant precisely, but it necessitated his revealing the new section of Loosha's highly coloured story. No comment was possible, for Bede did not know whether she meant to cast him off or whether he was still engaged to her, but the letter next morning definitely enlightened him. It was in Loosha's large, sprawling hand, and very long, with much repetition, but the gist of it was that she did not intend to have any more to do with him, and had not stopped in Newcastle at all but gone straight on south to her father's house. He could not have cared for her the least little bit when he persisted in giving away all his money, she wrote. His hundred pounds she was keeping, as she thought he owed her at least that.

'You will laugh to think how cleverly I got it out of you, but it

may do for a trousseau after all, if I am quick to find someone ; but I shall not be such a stupid as to marry a poor man ; I think also I am too pretty for that.'

Ten days later and the grey clouds gathering heavily over the scimitar-like sweep of Oban Bay swung their contents downwards, and drenched those who did not scurry for shelter into the doorways of shops. There were not many about, for it was between six and seven in the morning, and as cold as a midwinter day. The only people who determinedly crossed the rain-swept open space, and made for the quay, were those going as passengers in the little steamer that hissed gently alongside while men in coarse blue jerseys pitched miscellaneous gear on board, and handled expertly, and not ungently, about twenty woolly sheep as part of the cargo.

Bede Delaval went up the gangway in a raincoat, with his cap well pulled down over his eyes. A tall girl just in front of him slipped on the wet slanting boards. He put out a hand to save her, but she was quicker than he, and regaining her balance shot a merry glance at him under her dark-green, shapeless 'tam.' She disappeared into the cabin, and did not come on deck until they were under weigh, and passing the green point of Lismore. The rain had now ceased, and she had left her headgear below, and stood by the forward rail with her long mackintosh open, in her neat dark-blue serge coat and skirt, with her eyes fixed on the opening hills ahead.

From where Bede stood he could see her well ; her dark hair, uncut, was taken straight back from her forehead, and looped up loosely behind ; its wiriness prevented its lying flat to her small head.

Fresh, free, untrammelled, she seemed to him. There were two or three other passengers huddled in chairs, obviously tourists, but she was native to this place. One could surmise how easily those low-heeled, well-built shoes would carry her up the long green boulder-strewn slopes of the mountains to the black precipices near the summit. She had an indescribable atmosphere of purity about her, the purity not of ignorance but of preference. Every gesture showed a discreet capability.

'Truth in the inward parts,' came involuntarily into his mind on looking at her.

What really puzzled him was that he knew her, or had seen her, somewhere long ago, so that she was bound up with the deepest fibres of his life. Yet it could not really be long ago, for though her

figure was well formed, she was not more than seventeen or eighteen.

He worked his way nearer to her by degrees, and when he could speak without startling her, he waved his appreciation of the mountains of Morven, over which the mists were now rising. Through the rift in the clouds the light fell here and there in opalescent patches, showing up the spreading cataracts that seamed them like veins of marble.

As the girl turned to him, he was aware of something about her profound and elemental, before which the inanities and crudities of society life shrivelled up ; it was the real thing.

She looked at him without shyness, but with a certain roguishness which showed she knew him for a male creature and was on her guard, but she answered at once :

‘ When I see the mountains again I am always glad ; but for all that I feel they are wanting to give me some message that is too deep and grand for me to hear.’

Then he knew her, and holding out his hand with an exclamation of pleasure, he cried :

‘ You are my cousin Kirsty ! ’

THE END.

*LETTERS OF DR. JOHNSON TO SIR ROBERT
CHAMBERS.*

DR. JOHNSON had many friends who were lawyers—barristers of the Inns of Court, and advocates of Doctors' Commons, Stowell, Thurlow, Chambers; and among attorneys Hawkins. But we know little of the actual friendly intercourse of Johnson with his legal friends, for neither Boswell nor Mrs. Thrale, to whom we chiefly owe our knowledge of the Doctor's life, tell us much about it. Robert Chambers was, as has just been said, one of these friends, but he is now little more than a name to us, a man who but for coming into the background of the picture of Johnson's life, would not have been remembered by succeeding generations. In his own day he attained a substantial position in his profession, and was one of those academical lawyers, connected simultaneously with Oxford or Cambridge and professional life in London, who were characteristic of the eighteenth century.

Chambers, who was born in 1737, was a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and was educated in that city in the same school as Lord Stowell and Lord Eldon. Proceeding with a scholarship to Lincoln College, Oxford, he took his degree of B.A. in 1758, and, in 1761, was elected a Fellow of University College. In 1762 he came into prominent notice in his University by succeeding Blackstone as Vinerian Professor of English Law, securing in 1766 the sinecure appointment of Principal of New Inn Hall, a post which he held until his death in 1803. In 1754 Chambers had entered as a student at the Middle Temple, but was not called to the Bar until 1761, thenceforward simultaneously practising professionally in London and carrying on academical work in Oxford. His practice was considerable and in 1773 he obtained an appointment as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Bombay. This was indeed an adventure for an Oxford professor, but it was followed by another quite as bold, for before he sailed for India, in April, 1774, he married a beautiful girl of sixteen, daughter of a sculptor, Joseph Wilton, R.A., Fanny Wilton, who accompanied him to the East. Here in 1789 he succeeded Sir Elijah Impey as Chief Justice, a position which he resigned in 1799, when he returned to England.

Such are the main landmarks in the life of Chambers, an able, upright and agreeable man, for whom it is evident Johnson had a sincere affection. Into the life of the Doctor Chambers enters when he was an undergraduate at Oxford in 1754,¹ during a stay of five weeks, a memorable visit, the first since Johnson left the University.

From a letter which Johnson wrote to the youthful Chambers on November 21st, 1754, asking him to execute a small commission in reference to certain manuscripts, with Thomas Warton, we know that Chambers had just then visited Johnson in London: 'I hope, dear Sir,' Johnson writes, 'you do not regret the change of London for Oxford'; and he concludes by expressing a wish to hear from him whenever he should be so kind as to write. This letter is the only one from Johnson to Chambers which has hitherto been published; it shows that an intimate friendship had already grown up between Johnson, who was then forty-five, and Chambers a boy, as one may say, of seventeen.

In the remarkable collection of Johnsoniana in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo, U.S.A., there is a series of twenty-three letters from Johnson to Chambers which enable us to visualise to-day this remarkable friendship which certainly was a continuing pleasure to the Doctor. They are set out in the following pages through the generosity of Mr. Adam, to whom all lovers of Johnson are constantly indebted.

Johnson, it was evident, visited Oxford in the following year, 1755. Before he left he wrote a note to Chambers and then a short letter, which show the intimacy which had so quickly grown up.

'DEAR SIR,

'Mr Wise [the Radcliffe librarian] kept me so late that I could not come home soon enough to bid you farewell, and thank you for your company and kindness. I therefore have left this note to testify my acknowledgements.

'I shall be glad to see you at London, for I am

'Sir

'affectionately yours

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'Monday night

'(August, 1755).'

¹ In the *Dictionary of National Biography* it is erroneously stated that the friendship began in 1766.

'DEAR SIR

'Being kept late by Mr Wise, I could not see you the last night but left a note in your Newton which I hope you found. I once more return you thanks for your kindness and company.

'As you are soon to come to town I shall be glad if you will pay my Barber whom I forgot for a weeks shaving &c and call at Mrs Simpson's for a box of pills which I left behind me, and am loath to lose. I am

'Sir

'Your most humble servant

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'Aug: 7, 1755.'

In 1756 Johnson was busy superintending and contributing to a periodical, *The Literary Magazine or Universal Review*, the first number of which appeared in May of that year, and enlisted Chambers among the contributors, clearly assuming an editorial attitude. The following letter seems in its first part to refer to a review of a biography which Chambers had agreed to write.

'DEAR SIR

'Your Life came indeed too late for the month, but we suffered no inconvenience from the delay, because we had more materials than room. I have sent it already to the press, unread, for the next month, and am much obliged to you for doing it. I will contrive to find you more work. If you could send us any performances from Oxford they would be of great advantage to us. I wish you could add something to the printed accounts of any events that happen among you. I shall take care to send you the monthly [every] month gratis, if you contribute to it. But you must not tell that I have any thing in it. For though it is known conjecturally I would not have it made certain.

'Your friends Mr Levett and Mrs. Williams are both well, and I believe nothing has happened here in which you can be much interested. You have little to do with war or trade, and if your curiosity outgoes your interest, and inclines you to know what little concerns you, intelligence will reach you as soon as me, who have scarcely any information but from the publick papers.

'I think much on my friends, and shall take pleasure to hear of your operations at Lincoln college, when I am unconcerned about the marches and countermarches in America, [referring to the war between England and France in North America] therefor pray write sometimes to

'Dear Sir

'Your affectionate servant

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'July 31, 1756.'

The *Literary Magazine* came to an end in July, 1758, and the next letters—which are of that year—refer to an incident in Chambers' life of personal importance, but which is quite obscure; apparently he was a candidate for a University appointment in which evidently the Doctor felt a keen interest.

In the letter of April 14, 1758, one notes some practical and characteristic Johnsonian remarks in regard to academic posts and the profession of the law, prefaced by a brief note of April 8:

'I have only time to tell you that I have little interest, but that I wish you success. You will read the inclosed papers and do with them as you please.

'DEAR SIR

'I long to hear how you go on in your solicitation, and what hopes you have of success. Of what value do you expect any of these new benefactions to be. The great fault of our constitution is that we have many little things which may support idleness, but scarcely any thing great enough to kindle ambition. So that very few men stay in the houses who are qualified to live elsewhere. A professorship of the common law is at least decent, but I do not expect it to be of much use; it will not be worth the acceptance of any practical Lawyer, and a mere speculalist [*sic*] will have no authority. However I am glad it is thought on.

'I have sent you a parcel of receipts, as a fund out of which any body that wants them may be supplied; set down the numbers of those which you give to others.

'Let me know which of my letters you delivered, and how they were received. I have no pretensions to much regard from those to whom I wrote, having never done any thing for them. However let me hear what they said to you.

'I am,

'Sir,

'Your most affectionate

'and

'most humble servant

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'Apr. 14. 1758.'

'DEAR SIR

'I am extremely glad that you are likely to succeed. The honour is not less that you have one of the Scholarships without opposition, for you have it only because your character makes opposition hopeless. Nothing remains but that you consider

how much will be expected from one that begins so well, and that you take care not to break the promise you have made.

'Mr Newberry, [a well-known bookseller] left a packet for you on your table which you forgot to mention.

'I need not recommend Mr. Baretti [the Italian man of letters who was for many years a conspicuous figure in the Johnson-Thrale circle] to you he is now taking a ramble through part of England, and I hope will be well used, whenever he comes.

'I am

'Dear Sir

'Your most affectionate

'and

'most humble servant

'SAM : JOHNSON.

'June 1. 1758.'

'Mr. Wise wrote me an answer with high commendations of you.'

Two letters in 1760 are in themselves of little interest, but they show how sedulously Johnson preserved his friendship with Chambers. One may be quoted:

'DEAR SIR

'The Gentleman who brings this is [a] very learned and celebrated Mathematician of Italy. I am sorry that he visits Oxford in the vacation, but am the less sorry since you are there, whose civility and knowledge will supply the place of many other friends to whom I might have recommended him.

'I am

'Dear Sir

'Your most obliged servant

'SAM : JOHNSON.

'June 23, 1760.'

In 1761 Chambers was elected, as already stated, a fellow of University College.

The letters of 1761, 1762 and 1763 throw no light on the friendship of Chambers and Johnson except as evidence of the confidence which Johnson had in his friend.

'DEAR SIR

'I thank you for transmitting my letter, to which I have had an answer reasonable enough as to the conditions, but written

in so unscholarlike a manner, that I must entreat the favour of you to make some enquiry into his abilities by such means as may not hurt him. I suppose it very possible that a Schoolmaster sufficiently skilful and learned, may for want of use be no great writer of English letters, but having at present nothing or but little to put in ballance against his deficiencies, I am in doubt what to determine. You will by taking [the or this¹] affair a little to heart, do what will be considered as [a] very important kindness to,

‘Sir,

‘Your most humble servant

‘SAM : JOHNSON.

‘Oct. 22. 1762.’

‘Mrs Williams sends her compliments.’—[*On margin of letter.*]

‘DEAR SIR

‘If you will be so kind as to send me a speedy answer to the question inclosed, you will do a favour to a very ingenious Gentleman, who has some interest in it, and to whom it [will] be very pleasing to me, to procure any gratification.

‘Be pleased to make my compliments to the Gentlemen of your College. Langton is come home.

‘I am,

‘Sir,

‘Your most humble servant

‘SAM : JOHNSON.

‘March 15. 1763.’

The card enclosed reads—

‘I want some Gentleman resident in Oxford to examine the University Registers with a view to inform me whether the Rev^d Mr. Thomas Warter who was matriculated in 1745 or 1746, and afterw^{ds} took his Degree of A.B. and A.M. has yet proceeded to take his degree of B.D. I forgot to mention that Mr Warter was of Christ-Church.’

On reverse of card—

‘Concerns Mr Thomas Warter of Christ Church. The favour of a speedy answer is intreated.’

Boswell has nothing to tell us of Johnson’s life in 1766, but from the Doctor’s diary and from the correspondence in Mr. Adam’s collection it appears that Johnson visited Oxford in the autumn

¹ Blotted out.

of that year. It is regrettable that the first of the two following letters is in a fragmentary state.

‘DEAR SIR

‘I was much delighted both with the poetry and prose of your affectionate letter. The company of the Ladies will add much to the pleasure of our cohabitation at Oxford, but you must put up a Bed for me in another Chamber.

‘I have passed this summer very uneasily. My old melancholy has laid hold upon me to a degree sometimes not easily supportable. God has been pleased to grant me some remission for a few days past.’ [*Here the page is torn off.*]

On reverse—

‘that visit to be long, but there are some who will expect to see me.

‘I do not design that it shall be longer than may consist with our necessary operations. Let me therefore know immediately how soon it will be necessary for us to be together. If I cannot immediately go with you to Oxford, you must be content to stay a little while in London.

‘The great enquiry which you make I am not not [*sic*] qualified to satisfy at present, but we will endeavour to discuss it at leisure, and much’ [*Here the page is torn off.*] [September, 1766 ?]

The other asks for information on a point of law:

‘I beg to be informed, if you know or can enquire what are the reasons for which Dr Blackstone thinks the late embargo to be not legal, as I hear he does. it always seemed legal to me. But I judge upon mere principles without much knowledge of laws or facts.

‘Absurdum est cuis plus licet, ei minus non licere.’

Towards the end of 1766 and during the following year Johnson’s attention was concentrated on a dispute between the Government and the East India Company, which eventually came before Parliament in June, 1767. Apparently Johnson was engaged in putting forward the case of the Company.

‘DEAR SIR

‘I suppose you are dining and supping, and lying in bed. Come up to town, and lock yourself up from all but me, and I doubt not but Lectures will be produced. You must not miss another term.

‘If you could get me any information about the East Indian affairs, you may promise that if it is used at all, it shall be used in favour of the Company. Come up and work, and I will try to help you. You asked me what amends you could make me. You shall always be my friend. I am

‘Dear Sir

‘Your affectionate humble servant

‘SAM: JOHNSON.

‘Decr. 11. 1766.’

‘DEAR SIR

‘The affairs of the East Indies are to come at last before the parliament, and therefore we shall be glad of any information about them. We are likewise desirous of the papers which have been laid before the House, which can be no longer secret, and therefore, I suppose may be easily granted us. We will pay for transcribing if that be any difficulty. What other papers shall be put into our hands, shall be used if they are used at all, in defence of the company. Help us, dear Sir, if you can.

‘I hope you are soon to come again, and go to the old business, for which I shall expect [¹] abundance of materials and to sit very close, and then there will be no danger, and needs to be no fear. I am

‘Dear Sir,

‘Your most humble servant

‘SAM: JOHNSON.

‘London. Jan. 22. 1767.’

A gap of three years now occurs in the correspondence which has been preserved, though the intercourse, personal and epistolary, was not in fact interrupted, for we know from a letter of April 28, 1768, to Mrs. Thrale, that Johnson had stayed with Chambers and had been ill during his visit: ‘he [Chambers] has been neither negligent nor troublesome; nor do I love him less for having been ill in his house.’ We resume the present series on March 24, 1770, when a visit to Oxford was projected, and Johnson writes—

‘I see nothing that needs hinder me from going with you for a few days to Oxford, and therefore intend to do it. I am just now out of order with the Rheumatism, but hope to get over it. Though it is painful, it is an evil much more easily born than my former complaints.’

Apparently this visit did not take place and Johnson did not leave London until July, when he went to Lichfield.

¹ Word erased.

In 1771 Chambers asked the Doctor to come to Oxford, but the visit was then declined.

'DEAR SIR

'I am very much obliged by your kind invitation, but as you are to come hither so soon, why should we make journies for that which will be had without them.

'Quadrigis petimus bene vivere; quod petis hic est.

'We can live together in town, and dine in chambers or at the mitre, and do as well as at New in hall.

'My friends tell me that I am pretty well, and I hope you are well too. Come hither as soon as you can. I am

'Sir

'Your most humble servant,

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'Apr. 6. 1771.'

The single letter of 1772 is chiefly interesting for Johnson's amusing remark about Boswell.

'DEAR SIR

'I found my desire of your company excited by your kind letter, but a little business in which I am now engaged puts it out of my power to gratify myself without more inconvenience than you desire me to incur. We must therefore be content for some time to live apart. I am detained here as you are detained at Oxford. In the mean time you need not forget me. I shall be glad to hear any good of my old friends at University college, or any other house.

'I think nothing has happened here, but that Boswel is come up gratis with an appeal to the Lords. While I am writing I expect to hear him come in, with his noisy benevolence.

'I am

'Sir

'Your most humble servant

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'London. April 11. 1772.'

After staying at Lichfield and at Ashbourne with Dr. Taylor, in October and November, 1772, Johnson decided, as he writes to Mrs. Thrale, to find his 'way to London, thence to Birmingham and Oxford,' and on the journey invited himself to stay with Chambers.

'DEAR SIR,' he writes from Lichfield on December 3,

'By your advertisement I guess that you are at Oxford. I shall

come through Oxford next week and if you leave it, beg the favour of you to order beds for me and Francis at your Hall.

'I am,

'Sir,

'Your most humble servant,

'Lichfield. Dec. 3. 1772.'

'SAM: JOHNSON.

Johnson's famous journey to the Hebrides with Boswell commenced in August, 1773, and as far as Newcastle he was accompanied by Chambers. 'Chambers,' wrote Johnson to Boswell, 'is going as a judge with six thousand a year to Bengal, he and I shall come down together as far as Newcastle,' where, says Boswell, he was going to take leave of his relations. Twice during the immortal expedition Johnson wrote to Chambers and also sent him a short note on his arrival in London.

'DEAR SIR

'We are imp[risoned]¹ in Skie. The weather is such as no boat will venture [to cross over]¹. Two have been lately lost in these equinoctial tempests. This restraint, which has all the alleviations that courtesy and hospitality can afford, is made very painful to me by the fear of not being able to take leave of you, before your departure. If I am detained from you by insuperable obstructions, let this be witness that I love you, and that I wish you all the good that can be enjoyed through [the] whole of our Existence. You are going where there will be many opportunities of profitable wickedness, but you go with good principles, a confirmed and solid Christian. I hope to see you come back with fortune encreased, and Virtue grown more resolute by contest.

'Do not forget young Lawrence. His father [Johnson's friend and physician] has for more than twenty years been doing me all the good that he could, and I believe you will not look with indifference on the son of a Man to whom I am desirous to give assistance in the only case, which can probably put assistance in my [power]¹. If I do not come, be pleased to call on him as you very [kindly]¹ proposed.

'If you go before I [come, write]¹ me a letter. I shall value it. I can say no more but that [again]¹ and again I wish you well.

'I am,

'Dear Sir,

'Most affectionately yours

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'Ostick, in Skie. Sept. 30. 1773.'

¹ Torn out.

' Isle of Mull, Oct. 15, 1773.

' DEAR SIR,

' We have been driven by the Wind out to *Coll*, an Island which has no communication with the world. We have now reached Mull in a sloop which we hired on purpose. We are hastening home as fast as we can.

' Boswel will expect that I should pass a few days at his Father's, and by one stop and another, we shall hardly see Edinburgh, before a letter from you may arrive. I beg that you will immediately write, if you are yet in London, and tell me the time fixed for your departure. I am very desirous to take my leave of you, since you are going far off and I feel very sensibly the weight of time.

' Be pleased before you write to call on Mrs Williams, who may have something to say which she cannot well entrust to her ordinary secretaries. If they are in want of money, and you are not going, before I can see you, advance them what they cannot do without. Do not omit a post. I am,

' Dear Sir,

' Your humble servant,

' SAM : JOHNSON.'

' DEAR SIR

' I came home last night no more weary than if I had not moved from the same place. I have desired Mr Levet to take a place for me in Monday's coach. You will take care that we have our time to ourselves.

' I am,

' Dear Sir,

' Your humble servant.

' Nov. 27. 1773.'

It was on this visit that, walking one day with Chambers and John Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon (who preserved the story in his notebook), in the garden of New Inn Hall, Johnson noticed that Chambers was picking up snails and throwing them into the neighbouring garden, which caused him to expostulate with his host. But when told that the adjoining garden belonged to a Dissenter, he promptly exclaimed : ' Throw away, Sir, throw away.'

Chambers did not sail for India until April of the following year, and so Johnson's fear of not seeing him before he left was groundless, but it indicates the value which he set on this friendship. Though they were never to meet again, both men continued to correspond, and in 1779 we have a short letter from Johnson, who had received one from Chambers and his wife.

'DEAR SIR

'Your long letter and Lady Chambers's pretty journal gave me great delight, and I intend a long answer for which the bringer of this letter cannot stay, for he goes away to-morrow. I believe it will please you to hear that my health has within this last half year been improved very perceptibly to myself, and very visibly to others. I am not without hope of seeing you again.

'I am very glad that you have thought it proper to show some countenance to Mr Joseph Fowke. I always thought him a good Man, and I loved him as long as I knew him. Do not let him be oppressed so far as you can protect him.

'Mr Levet, and Mrs. Williams are still with me; Levet is stout, but Williams is declining. I will not tell you more of my domestick affairs, because I reserve for my long letter. The reason for which I now write, is that this young adventurer may have an opportunity of seeing you, and some kind of right to such notice as you can properly take of him, as the son of an ingenious man, and an amiable woman who were known to,

'Dear Sir,

'Your faithful humble servant

'SAM: JOHNSON.

'Oct. 31. 1779.

'Bolt court, Fleet street.'

The final letter of the series and the most interesting, as I think, was written in 1783, nearly ten years after Chambers had left England. Johnson's friendship shows no diminution in spite of the distance which separated the two men. Throughout his life the Doctor set the highest value on friendship; to obtain new friends as old ones disappeared was advice he often gave, to retain as long as possible existing friendships was to his mind equally important, and this last letter to Chambers in the year before his death shows how admirably he put his precepts into practice.

'DEAR SIR

'Of the books which I now send you I sent you the first edition, but it fell by the chance of war into the hands of the French. I sent likewise to Mr. Hastings. Be pleased to have these parcels properly delivered.

'Removed as We are with so much land and sea between us, We ought to compensate the difficulty of correspondence by the length of our letters, yet searching my memory, I do not [find] much to communicate. Of all publick transactions you have more exact accounts than I can give; you know our foreign miscarriages

and our intestine discontents, and do not want to be told that we have now neither power nor peace, neither influence in other nations nor quiet amongst ourselves. The state of the Publick, and the operations of government have little influence upon the private happiness of private men, nor can I pretend that much of the national calamities is felt by me; yet I cannot but suffer some pain when I compare the state of this Kingdom, with that in which we triumphed twenty years ago. I have at least endeavoured to preserve order and support Monarchy.

‘Having been thus allured to the mention of myself, I shall give you a little of my story. That dreadful illness which seized me at New inn Hall, left consequences which have I think always hung upon me. I have never since cared much to walk. My mental abilities I do not perceive that it impaired. One great abatement of all miseries was the attention of Mr. Thrale, which from our first acquaintance was never intermitted. I passed far the greater part of many years in his house where I had all the pleasure of riches without the solicitude. He took me into France one year, and into Wales another, and if he had lived would have shown me Italy and perhaps many other countries, but he died in the spring of eighty one, and left me to write his epitaph.

‘But for much of this time my constitutional maladies persued me. My thoughts were disturbed, my nights were insufferably restless, and by spasms in the breast I was condemned to the torture of sleepyness without the power to sleep. These spasms after enduring them more than twenty years I eased by three powerful remedies, abstinence, opium and mercury, but after a short time they were succeeded by a strange oppression of another kind which when I lay down disturbed me with a sensation like flatulence or intumescence which I cannot describe. To this supervened a difficulty of respiration, such as sometimes makes it painful to cross a street or climb to my chamber; which I have eased by venisection till the Physician forbids me to bleed, as my legs have begun to swel. Almost all the last year past in a succession of diseases *ἐκ κακῶν κακά*, and this year till within these few days has heaped misery upon me. I have just now a lucid interval.

‘With these afflictions, I have the common accidents of life to suffer. He that lives long must outlive many, and I am now sometimes to seek for friends of easy conversation and familiar confidence. Mrs Williams is much worn; Mr Levet died suddenly in my house about a year ago. Doctor Lawrence is totally disabled by a palsy, and can neither speak nor write. He is removed to Canterbury. Beauclerc died about two years ago and in his last sickness desired to be buried by the side of his Mother. Langton

has eight children by Lady Rothes. He lives very little in London, and is by no means at ease. Goldsmith died partly of a fever and partly of anxiety, being immoderately and disgracefully in debt. Dier [Samuel Dyer, a learned and modest member of the Literary club] lost his fortune by dealing in the East India stock, and, I fear, languished into the grave. Boswells father is lately dead, but has left the estate incumbered; Boswel has, I think, five children. He is now paying us his annual visit, he is all that he was, and more. Doctor Scot prospers exceedingly in the commons, but I seldom see him; He is married and has a Daughter.

‘Jones now Sir William, will give you the present state of the club, which is now very miscellaneous, and very heterogeneous it is therefore without confidence, and without pleasure. I go to it only as to a kind of publick dinner. Reynolds continues to rise in reputation and in riches, but his health has been shaken. Dr. Percy is now Bishop of Dromore, but has I believe lost his only son. Such are the deductions from human happiness.

‘I have now reached an age which is to expect many diminutions of the good, whatever it be, that life affords; I have lost many friends, I am now either afflicted or threatened by many diseases, but perhaps not with more than are commonly incident to encrease of years, and I am afraid that I bear the weight of time with unseemly, if not with sinful impatience. I hope that God will enable me to correct this as well as my other faults, before he calls me to appear before him.

‘In return for this history of myself I shall expect some account of you, who by your situation have more much to tell. I hope to hear that the Ladies and the Children are all well, and that your constitution accommodates itself easily to the climate. If you have health, you may study, and if you can study, you will surely not miss the opportunity which place and power give you, beyond what any Englishman qualified by precious knowledge, ever enjoyed before, of enquiring into Asiatick Literature. Buy manuscripts, consult the Scholars of the country, learn the languages, at least select one, and master it. To the Malabarick Books Europe is, I think, yet a Stranger. But my advice comes late; what you purpose to do, you have already begun, but in all your good purposes persevere. Life is short, and you do not intend to pass all your life in India.

‘How long you will stay, I cannot conjecture. The effects of English Judicature are not believed here to have added any thing to the happiness of the new dominions. Of you, Sir, I rejoice to say that I have heard no evil. There was a trifling charge produced in parliament, but it seems to be forgotten, nor did it appear to imply any thing very blamable. This purity of

character you will, I hope continue to retain. One of my last wishes for you, at a gay table was ἀετήν τε καὶ δαβόν. Let me now add in a more serious hour, and in more powerful words—*Keep innocence, and take heed to the thing that is right, for that shall bring a Man peace at the last.*

‘I shall think myself favoured by any help that you shall give to Mr. Joseph Fowke, or Mr. Lawrence. Fowke was always friendly to me, and Lawrence is the son of a Man [Dr Lawrence, his physician] whom I have long placed in the first rank of my friends. Do not let my recommendation be without effect.

‘Let me now mention an occasion on which you may perhaps do great good without evil to yourself. Langton is much embarrassed by a mortgage made, I think, by his grandfather, and perhaps aggravated by his father. The Creditor calls for his money, and it is in the present general distress very difficult to make a *versura*. If you could let him have six thousand pounds, upon the security of the same land, you would save him from the necessity of selling part of his Estate under the great disadvantage produced by the present high price of money. This proposal needs give you no pain, for Langton knows nothing of it, and may perhaps have settled his affairs before the answer can be received. As the security is good, you should not take more than four per cent.

‘Nothing now, I think, remains but that I assure you, as I do, of my kindness, and good wishes, and express my hopes that you do not forget

‘Your old Friend

‘and humble servant,

‘SAM : JOHNSON.

‘Bolt court, Fleetstreet. Apr. 19. 1783.

‘Mr. Langton, who is just come in, sends his best respects, but he knows still nothing.’

Fragmentary though the correspondence contained in the preceding pages is, it unquestionably transforms into life what has hitherto been a mere dry biographical statement. From it we are able to appreciate the important influence for many years of this intimacy on the happiness of Johnson; there were no special intellectual ties between him and Chambers, but the Doctor seems to have found in the Oxford lawyer a man of agreeable personality and sound judgment, upon whom he could always rely and in whose company he always found pleasure.

E. S. ROSCOE.

[*A catalogue of Mr. R. B. Adam's Johnsoniana in three volumes will shortly be published.*]

THE BLACK PATCH.

BY JOHN HORNE.

I.

CHRISTOPHER DOUNE stared at the expanse of wall opposite him. The sole relief to its grey monotony was an office calendar, upon which an enormous 25, above a slightly smaller Wednesday, emphasised the fact that the world had reached the middle of the week and was approaching the end of the month.

Under so adverse a conjunction of time, Christopher Doune's look hardened. There was protest in it—revolt almost—disbelief, pleading, and over all, the indifference that so thinly veils despair. He was only too well aware of the date and the day of the month. The calendar overplayed its part. It seemed to hear the words to which he was forced to listen, and to mock him silently. He longed to tear it from the wall.

The end of the month! An all too swiftly recurring moment of difficulty and scheming. This time it seemed to Christopher the end of everything. Close beside him a voice was speaking in measured tones, undermining the structure of his labour, destroying his confidence, smashing his ideals. It was a cultured voice, polite, even complimentary, but beneath the easily flowing phrases its sinister purpose stood out only too plainly. No amount of scheming would surmount the difficulties of this month's end—if the voice said what Christopher felt it was about to say. So he stared at the grey wall with the black and white calendar on it, and awaited the inevitable.

'You have talent, Mr. Doune—undoubted talent—and in saying that, I am paying you no empty compliment. As head of, well, a fairly important literary agency, I should—in an ordinary case—have returned the manuscript with one of those polite notes of refusal, that you—er—that we all know so well. I preferred a personal interview.—Hullo!—the telephone at his elbow had rung as if to prolong Christopher's agony. 'Yes . . . will you tell Miss Merrilees that I shall see her in three minutes? Wonderful woman,' he went on, putting down the receiver—'such daring! You have read her *Green Badger*, of course. Well, as I was

saying, Mr. Doune, your story has its good points—many good points—and I like your style. Your great fault is that you don't remain true to nature in your important situation. Now, Miss Merrilees never strays from nature, or rather, she compels it to follow her. You go out of your way to court the improbable. You make your hero discover your villain by an unconscious knowledge that he *is* the villain. He just spots him, among hundreds of other spectators at a State performance at the Opera. How? Why? No suspicion beforehand. Nothing to catch on to. And your hero is quite an ordinary fellow—neither crank nor detective—with nothing more tangible than a brain wave to help him. Psychoanalysis! Intuition! Call it what you like, it is threadbare, out-of-date. The public won't swallow it.'

Christopher Doune's eyes left the calendar and fastened on the pleasant-looking elderly man at the table. 'But such cases do occur,' he protested. 'The psychology of the situation is absolutely correct. I could give you several precedents.'

The literary agent smiled. 'No doubt you could, Mr. Doune. Psychology is all very well in its proper place, which is *not* the modern serial story. Avoid it, unless you can gild the pill sufficiently to make it palatable. I am sorry to disappoint you, but it is no use beating about the bush. Take my advice and try again on fresh lines. And, by the way, you really must not call your heroine Mildred. Whoever could be interested in a girl with such a Victorian name?'

For a moment he hesitated. Had Christopher's look told him something of what lay behind it? Had he detected more than the commonplace disappointment that so often faced him? In any case, to the pause that was to have been final, there came a sequel, of which the jocular tone did not hide its underlying kindness.

'I'll make you an offer, Mr. Doune. If you can show me a case in real life, of psychological intuition, inexplicable and without reason, leading to concrete discovery—as your hero discovers your villain—I'll publish your tale in our own magazine, and you know what that means to a budding author. Now, I must not keep Miss Merrilees waiting. Good-bye.'

II.

'Whoever could be interested in a girl called Mildred?' reflected Christopher bitterly, as he passed into the street with the rejected

manuscript under his arm. Who should know that when he wrote of Mildred it was the outpouring of his innermost soul, that for him no other heroine could ever exist? For her he had toiled and hoped and kept up his courage. Her belief in his talent had inspired him. And now he was going back to her, broken and disappointed, to receive the comfort that only the woman one loves can give. She would be wonderfully brave, much braver than he. She would laugh at failure, and pretend that the end of the month could be managed—somehow; and the future would grow rosy once more, and he would start on a fresh story, with no Mildred to make it absurd, and no unexplained psychology to ruin it.

Victorian, the man had called her! Christopher scowled back at the dingy house with its narrow entrance and unobtrusive door-plate. Literary agent indeed! Well, his years of experience had taught him little, if he ignored the fact that Mildred by any other name would lose all her sweetness. With a shrug of his shoulders that was almost foreign in its intensity, Christopher continued his way westward.

In spite of his troubles he could not help remarking the strange surroundings in which literary effort came to judgment. At one end of the street lay a great market, filled to overflowing with every conceivable fruit and vegetable. Rare aromas gave a tropic flavour to the atmosphere. Piles of oranges and boxes of hothouse fruits, baskets of glowing apples, side by side with pots of roses and geraniums in a halo of flying dust, made a note of gaiety, an illusion of sunlight under the grey London sky. In the street, too, there was a strangeness, an incongruity of contrast that upset his sense of fitness. On the ground floor of the houses, large windows, filled with theatrical costumes, alternated with smaller ones, in which rows of books of the kind known as 'best sellers' flaunted their gaudy colours in shameless temptation of the passer-by. He glanced at a Crusader's armour facing the brocade of a David Garrick, but eyed the books hungrily. The strong man on the paper cover, in red shirt and riding breeches, was not his hero. The shingled girl at his side was not Mildred. The author had kept his nose to the earth, and millions read him. Christopher sighed.

For just a year Mildred had been Mrs. Doune, and mistress of two rooms and a kitchen, self-contained, in Pimlico. From a big West End office with the sign, 'Typing of every description, open all night,' she had brought back, sometimes in the evening, some-

times at grey dawn, her modest contribution to the common budget. Compared with the cheques which occasionally rewarded Christopher's literary efforts, her earnings seemed sadly inglorious, though they possessed the undoubted advantage of regularity. It had been a precarious existence, in which somehow or other both ends just managed to meet, till the fatal and enchanting day when Christopher's genius had lured him to higher flights than he had hitherto attempted. He was sick, he declared, of pot boilers and stuff that had to be written on given lines. What was the use of talent—undoubted talent several editors had assured him—if it were never given a real chance? He must strike out in a new direction. Thus argued Christopher, while Mildred listened in fear and admiration, and went back to the office to make her typewriter click still faster. In her profession talent and stupidity were equally precious—at so much the thousand.

III.

So Adam wrote and Eve typed while hopes rose and fell and funds ran lower and lower. For the flights of undoubted talent seemed doomed to end in crashes. Work that had once been sure of a market, now came back with unfailing regularity. There was something else too, a new and wonderful factor, drawing their lives still closer. Mildred no longer went to the office. 'I'll get work to do at home—after Baby is born,' she whispered, with a pathetic smile at Christopher. 'Don't you worry, old girl,' he protested. 'I've got a new situation here—something the editors will simply fight for—a case of psychological intuition, leading to the discovery of the villain. Unsolved problems are all the rage just now.' He patted the parcel of manuscript proudly. 'You're the heroine, darling, so its bound to be a success. I ought to get eighty for it, perhaps a hundred—with luck.'

That was weeks ago; and now the parcel was once more under his arm, back from many journeys, its talent appreciated but unwanted, its great situation judged impossible, its Mildred laughed at. Mildred! A lump rose in Christopher's throat, a lump hard swallowing did not move. He had known the feeling in the nightmare of the War. Then it had been just ordinary fear, with mud and blood as its accompaniment, but this was a thousand times worse. He was afraid of the two rooms down in that narrow street, afraid of what must happen there. Even with good news to cheer

them the next days would have been pretty bad. Now they were going to be hell. He longed for action. In Flanders it had been a godsend—but this was a different kind of fighting. He walked down from Lower Regent Street with leaden feet. For once all inclination to hurry home was absent. Yet the crowd annoyed him. It kept moving in his direction, as if to accompany him. The broad space leading to the Duke of York's Steps was black with people, all heading south. Christopher turned along Pall Mall to avoid them, but found the corner by Marlborough House so densely packed that he could only move very slowly. What was happening, he wondered? It seemed ridiculous to ask when everybody had the air of knowing what they were about. A woman's voice came to his rescue. 'That makes the sixth Opening of Parliament I've seen,' it declared. 'Lady Cynthia will be in the fourth carriage. No, *not* with the Duchess of Devonshire. The Prince comes through at 11.25 and the King and Queen five minutes later.' The Opening of Parliament! How stupid not to have known. Perhaps the road was already closed. With difficulty he squeezed his way towards the Mall. The effort seemed to revive his spirits, and he was relieved to catch sight of a narrow opening between two mounted policemen and a vista of empty sanded roadway bounded by tall guardsmen. What a lot of soldiers! Christopher squared his shoulders. In the army they did things without being told they possessed undoubted talent. 'A lot of good talent has done me,' he reflected bitterly. 'A blinking quill driver—that's all I am—and N.B.G. at that!' It was funny how naturally the old expressions came in that atmosphere of parade.

With his parcel held as inconspicuously as possible, he passed between the lines of soldiers. The Mall seemed immense in its emptiness. Its only moving figure was a grey-haired official in a cocked hat, who rode slowly along, casting an occasional indifferent glance over the crowd. Some big man in the Police, thought Christopher. He's got his eye on them right enough. I wonder if they ever spot a criminal in a crowd like this? All at once the rejected situation in his story flashed through his mind, as if to demand justice, and instinctively he found himself seeking for a parallel. He longed to ask the cocked-hatted official if psychological intuition ever guided him in making an arrest. But it wouldn't be any good. They always know beforehand the man they want, he reflected, as he reached the other side of the roadway.

Now, to most of us, crossing a road may seem a very ordinary

occurrence, but in Christopher's case appearances were deceptive. For him that simple act was the beginning of an adventure, filled with strange and rapid happenings. No sooner had he passed the first rank of spectators, than he was faced by a tall man pushing his way somewhat roughly in the opposite direction. With a curt 'sorry' the man laid his hand upon Christopher's shoulder and thrust him firmly upon one side, at the same time searching him with a look that began at his eyes and ended at the parcel under his arm. Christopher returned the look angrily. Even in a crowd there was no need to push like that, and he resented being stared at. The stranger's face was youngish, dark and clean-shaven, beneath a somewhat shabby soft grey hat—exactly like lots of other faces around him—but for one remarkable difference. A large black patch, held in place by an elastic band, covered the left eye, making the other one appear strangely brilliant by contrast. Had there been time, the accusation of staring at that single eye might well have been applied to Christopher, but there was not. In less than a second it had made its rapid examination and turned away, to be lost with its owner in the crowd, while Christopher, propelled by the people behind him, found himself in the comparatively empty pathway leading across St. James's Park.

He stopped and looked back. At the same moment a sharp word of command rang out, followed by the roar of distant cheering. It sounded splendid, giving him a thrill of happiness. But in spite of the thrill his thoughts ran on—in the channel that had proved so tempting and so disastrous. After all, there must be plenty of dangerous people walking about London in perfect freedom. In a crowd like this, for instance . . . the face with the black patch over its left eye rose spectre-like in his memory. . . . That man—the black patch might well be a disguise—an excellent one, just because it was so simple—so obvious. Christopher's brain was working feverishly now. The man had bumped into him blindly, but he overdid it. There had been a queer look about him, too—a foreign look. By Jove! it all held together—a tall shabby foreigner, with a black patch over his left eye, pushing his way through the crowd at the last moment. Christopher shivered with excitement. Some uncanny power held him. What evidence had he? None . . . except the feeling he had tried so hard to describe. . . .

Throwing his parcel of manuscript into the bushes, he started to run. At last action had taken the place of theory, and the magnet

in the crowd was drawing him to it with irresistible force. The man with the black patch filled his mind. All else he ignored—the parson whose hat he sent flying—the woman's elbow that dug sharply as he passed—the outraged protests—everything.

He rose from the first triumphant impact like a footballer from the scrum, and looked around. Some distance away on the right was the man he sought, calmly planted in the very front line, the black patch standing out sinister, the single eye roving hawk-like over the empty roadway. Christopher charged the last spectator in his path. But here a strange thing happened. Though the onslaught was splendid it failed in its objective. Far from yielding as the others had done, the spectator turned like lightning, and the next moment he was struggling in the grip of a surprisingly powerful pair of arms, while a spectacled face, framed by a straggling beard thrust itself close to his.

Silly fool! thought Christopher, and struggled the harder. His recollection of what followed was a jumble of sight and sound, of the crowd swaying madly, of galloping horses and motionless busbies—and of the man with the black patch coming nearer and nearer. For a moment he almost succeeded in throwing off his adversary. Then a hand loosed its hold upon him, dived for a pocket—rose in the air. Something hit him on the forehead, and the world faded away into comfortable blackness.

IV.

Even with the clearest conscience 'coming to' is an unpleasant process, and in Christopher's case a blurred but insistent knowledge of failure made it especially painful. And there was worse. Not only had he failed in his object, but an absolutely unwarranted attack upon a harmless fellow citizen would have to be explained. Who would believe that he had only tried to get past his adversary, and that the man with the black patch had been his real objective? Even then, how could he explain his suspicions? His awakening mind pictured the future—conclusive tests for drunkenness, bail refused by an unsympathetic magistrate—and Mildred looking reproachfully at him through her tears. How his head throbbed! Psychological intuition had brought nothing but disaster, and the proof lay among the bushes in St. James's Park. 'I never want to see the damned manuscript again!' he groaned, opening his eyes.

He was lying on a couch in a large room, quite bare and shiny,

and smelling of disinfectant. Among the stars that flashed and twinkled over everything were faces, amiable and smiling, and in one case surmounted by a Police Inspector's cap.

'You'll be all right now, my lad,' said a cheery voice. 'They're fetching a taxi. Home and a rest is what you want.'

The owner of the voice, a young man in a white coat, moved aside while a nurse adjusted the bandage on Christopher's head. Hospital, he thought mechanically.

'A fine bit of work you've done this morning, Mr. Doune,' broke in another voice. Fine indeed, thought Christopher. The sarcasm underlying the word was obvious. The voice went on, 'What we want to know is . . .'

'Not now, Inspector. Give him a chance.' The doctor raised his hand in protest. 'Get your evidence this afternoon when he's rested, otherwise I won't answer for the consequences.'

'Oh, very well,' snapped the Inspector, shutting up his notebook, 'as you like.' Christopher felt considerably relieved. Any respite from the evil moment of questioning was welcome, and yet—

'Inspector,' he asked, with sudden inspiration, 'how did you know my name?' He had been wondering about that for some moments.

'Good Lord!' gasped the Inspector. 'Well, I'm blown!'

The doctor gave a chuckle. 'There's a poser for you, Inspector. He's still a bit dazed, I'm afraid. You'll have to wait.'

V.

No writer except Christopher Doune would have made Mildred his heroine, for she possessed neither the burnished copper hair nor the elusive smile so necessary for the part. To Christopher, however, she was wonderful, though not so wonderful as he was to her. Mildred's practical mind worshipped the artistic uncertainty of Christopher's, and found in each new idea a universe of fiction spread out to her admiring gaze. Even when manuscripts came back with only a printed slip and no written regrets that 'We fear this is over the heads of our readers,' or 'We should have taken this had we not been full up,' her belief in their excellence did not diminish. Acceptances thrilled her less. After all, they were Christopher's due and nothing more. So, in spite of the obvious and sadly inartistic need of money, she was quite prepared for failure. For Christopher's arrival with a policeman and a bandaged

head she was not prepared. It came as a shock, which the announcement that her husband was a hero—made by the policeman and echoed by the assembled neighbours—did little to lessen. She noticed, however, that he had not brought back the manuscript of his story, and the fact seemed of far greater importance than any vague exploits in a crowd. Surely it could have but one meaning.

When they were alone Christopher held her in his arms and kissed her silently. 'Chris, darling,' she said, looking up at him, 'so they've taken it at last. How splendid.'

'Taken what?' queried Christopher in a puzzled tone.

'Why, the manuscript of course. You didn't bring it back.'

'O damn the manuscript!' he burst out. 'A nice mess it has got me into! The agent said he could do nothing with it, and—and—I threw it away in St. James's Park. Milly—I ought never to have tried psychological intuition. I'm a selfish brute!'

Mildred bit her lip to keep back the tears. So it was failure after all. Well, it must be faced.

'Never mind the manuscript,' she said, and her voice was steady. 'My own Chris—you're safe, and that's all that matters. How did it happen, dear?'

He closed his eyes and tried to think. How *did* it happen? 'I don't know,' he replied. 'I was drawn on somehow. Then everything got mixed up—and somebody hit me on the head.'

His head! In a moment Mildred was her practical self again. 'It will all come back when you've had a good rest,' she said briskly. 'Then we'll talk, and you shall tell me everything.' And Christopher, because his head was still very sore, lay down obediently and slept.

The sound of a gently opening door brought him back to consciousness. Mildred stood looking down at him.

'Chris,' she whispered, 'a detective from Scotland Yard has come to see you. He said such nice things. You'll try to remember just what happened, won't you, dear?' and with a flying kiss she was gone.

Christopher Doune looked up slowly. At last the true meaning of psychological intuition was dawning upon him. Without reasoning, but very surely, he realised that his house of cards was about to collapse for ever. His eyes reached the open doorway. Framed in it stood a tall, youngish man, dark and clean-shaven, holding a shabby soft grey hat in his hand—the picture he knew he must see. With a despairing glance at the brilliant eyes,

he buried his face in his hands and sobbed aloud. It was too tragic—too unjust. The picture was not complete, but that did not help him. Even without the black patch there could be no doubt.

'Come now, Mr. Doune,' said the man, stepping forward. 'Still a bit nervy, I expect, and no wonder. Well, it was worth a knock or two. You tackled him splendidly.'

Christopher listened in amazement. What on earth did he mean? 'I don't understand,' he faltered.

'One moment, Mr. Doune, one moment. Let me finish. There is a very important question I must ask at once. What made you suspicious of Yanosh Glinka?'

'Who is Yanosh Glinka?' echoed Christopher.

The detective raised his eyebrows. 'Why, the man you tackled, of course. Do you mean to say you didn't know . . . ?'

'Never heard of him before in my life,' came the almost petulant reply. How tiresome it all was. And Yanosh Glinka—what an absurd name! Why couldn't the fellow come to the point and have done with it?

'Then why did you attack an absolute stranger?' The voice was solemn now.

Christopher gave a gulp. Good-bye psychology—good-bye dreams of success. Nothing could save him now.

'I didn't,' he cried. 'I only tried to get past him, and he turned and began fighting. I wanted to get at—at—a man with a black patch over his eye.'

For a moment there was silence. Then the detective sat down abruptly on the edge of the bed, his eyes twinkling more brilliantly than ever. Suddenly he burst into peals of laughter. 'Well, of all the quaint tales I ever heard, this beats the lot. Here you come—out of thin air, so to speak—and tackle Yanosh Glinka, whom *we* had been searching for everywhere. He knocks you on the head and gets arrested, false beard, goggles and all; and to think that you only wanted to get past him, and it was *me* you were after! I say,' he continued thoughtfully, 'was it the black patch?'

Christopher nodded.

'Now that's funny. Drew you on, did it? Well, some of us at the Yard go in for that sort of thing. Psychology they call it. The papers say that's what made you go for Yanosh Glinka, and I would have sworn they were right. My word, if they only guessed the truth!'

'Look here,' said Christopher, 'it's a mistake, a rotten mistake so far as I'm concerned.' Simply he told the tale of the morning's adventure and all that it meant to him. When it was ended there came a pause. 'I've been a fool,' he added. 'Not that I care about that, but my wife—you see, she thinks I'm an absolute hero.'

The detective sat silent. 'Mr. Doune,' he said at last, 'I'm a married man myself, and—well—I don't want to meddle in your affairs, but I think I see how things are. Nobody need know of your mistake. What you did remains good. It makes no difference why you did it. Take my advice and stick to the *kudos*. You can count on me to say nothing.'

'But it's all wrong,' protested Christopher. 'My idea of psychological intuition. . . .'

The brilliant eyes fixed themselves on his. 'Are you sure of that?' asked the detective. 'How do you know that psychological intuition wasn't working all the time?'

What Christopher would have answered will never be known, for at that very moment Mildred entered the room. In her hand she held an envelope. 'It's for you, dear,' she said, giving it to Christopher. Slowly he tore it open and read the contents.

'DEAR MR. DOUNE,—I must congratulate you upon having taken me at my word with so little loss of time. The details of your splendid and unaccountable exploit have just reached me. Putting aside its bravery, and without adding to the journalistic eulogies in which the papers are indulging so freely, may I show a more concrete form of appreciation and ask you to return me your manuscript? As your name alone will be an immense advertisement, I can offer you £150 and publish next month. And, by the way, may we call your villain Yanosh Glinka?

'Yours sincerely,

'SELBY WHITE.'

He sat staring at the last two lines. A hundred and fifty pounds for something he had not done! Mildred came and nestled up beside him. 'Is it—is it—for the manuscript?' she faltered.

'Yes,' he replied, crumpling the letter in his hand, 'that is—if I can find it. He offers £150. . . . If only it hasn't been stolen.'

The detective rose. His eyes were twinkling and a smile played about his lips. 'I think I have all necessary information about the case,' he said, 'so I won't intrude any longer.'

'Good-bye, Mr. Doune. Will you accept a little token of appreciation from Scotland Yard? A parcel that the police found among

the bushes in St. James's Park? It's in the hall. Don't ask how they knew it was yours. You see, there may be something in psychological intuition after all.'

'The manuscript!' cried Mildred. 'Oh, how can we thank you? It's too wonderful!'

With a sob of happiness she threw herself into Christopher's arms. Over her shoulder he saw once again the tall stranger of the Mall, with his foreign air and his shabby soft grey hat. Once again the black patch covered the left eye, but now the right eye looked at him and winked.

SUBSTITUTES AND SCIENCE.

BY HUBERT E. O'TOOLE.

It is characteristic of the substitute that it is deficient in something, that it is inferior to the real thing. That there is nothing like leather is not quite true, for nowadays there are quite a number of things which resemble leather very closely, but there is undoubtedly nothing quite so good as leather for certain purposes, and if one cannot have leather, for whatever reason, it is eternally true that however good the substitute one may put up with, one is still poorer than the man who can have it. And it is also true that leather, having of necessity all the good qualities of leather, has a greater variety of uses than any substitute for it. No matter how excellent in their way available imitations of leather may be, those who make use of them will always have a hankering for the real thing, and for this reason the substitutes are always made to look like leather: it is necessary to create an illusion of leather. They have most of the qualities of leather except the quality of being leather.

We have become so accustomed to substitutes that we scarcely realise that they are substitutes: we sometimes imagine that the substitutes are the original things. We say that we have heard Paderewski on the gramophone, forgetting that what we have heard is not the actual playing of Paderewski but a reproduction of the sound of it. It was undoubtedly very clever of us to become able to reproduce the waves in the air which Paderewski makes when he plays, but the fact still remains that our gramophones give us a substitute for the real thing: they do not really reproduce the real thing, and all such things as gramophones, the cinema, wireless sets, margarine, gas-fires and so forth are symbols of our exile from reality. They are things which are handed to us to soothe our longings, things which are made to look like the real things, as one might hand a picture of a meal to a hungry man.

They are intensely illogical when they merely imitate. A very interesting example of a modern substitute for a real thing is the gas-fire. The gas-fire is a kind of refinement embodying two of

the elements of a real fire, its heat and its brightness, but that it is not an independent fire, but a kind of slave fire or employé of a large organisation, is evidenced by the tube which connects it all the way to the gas-works, in which the more disagreeable features of fires, the smell and smoke, are concentrated into a very noticeable smell and a very definite grime, if not exactly smoke. There are undoubted benefits accruing to the use of a gas-fire, as for example that it provides immediate heat and requires no attention. But as it seems to me its most significant feature is that it cannot be poked. The poker was a real symbol of human independence and control over one's own fire. But a gas-fire is, in a manner of speaking, its own poker and seems to rule its user instead of its user ruling it. It is very rigid and unbending in its behaviour, and seems to give him definitely to understand that it requires not to be interfered with in any way. It is one of a large class of modern things which are what is known as 'fool-proof' and which put everyone on the same level of foolishness. In its un-winking efficiency the gas-fire seems to say to its user, 'You are such a fool that you cannot be trusted to do anything to me except turn me on and off,' which is not exactly the last word in tact or calculated to win his goodwill.

There must be something in man which hungers for a real fire, because all the most expensive gas-fires are made to resemble real fires as closely as possible. Some of the more unscrupulous take the form of grates full of imitation coals. I suppose sets of real fire-irons will eventually be supplied to further the illusion, in which case there would seem to be no reason why gas-fires should not be made so that they could be poked. The manner in which a guest pokes the fire sometimes gives us an insight into his character, so that there is a real need for a gas-fire which either requires to be poked occasionally, or alternatively, by means of a speaking apparatus, gives us some hints about his character in a voice which we will be able to hear but not he. There are other matters which might be attended to with advantage, as making provision for causing the fire to hiss when it is raining outside and when raindrops would fall on it if the flue were wide enough to allow them, and if there could also be means of seeing visions, strange forms and fairylands in the imitation coals one might be able to imagine at times that the fire was real. The danger of people tiring of interminable self-deception and dealing their gas-fires hearty kicks might be obviated by an invention which would

cause the fires to wink and blink merrily just at the moment when their owners were about to act rashly.

Margarine is the substitute for butter which progress provides for poor people. It is a poor sort of progress which goes from butter to margarine, a progress from a good thing to a bad thing, or from a definitely good thing to a worse thing. The poor are justified in complaining of that sort of progress, and saying that they would rather not progress in that particular way, and that if it is not possible to progress from butter to something better than butter it would perhaps be better if we did not progress at all and stuck to butter. But there it is; progress cannot provide butter for everybody and so provides margarine for some. Then when people complain of this, scientists proceed to try to make margarine identical with butter. They stoutly acknowledge that there is a great deal more to be achieved before margarine can be converted into butter, and proceed to devise ways and means of reproducing, at enormous cost, in the factory, the exact process of the common or milch cow combined with the dairymaid and the churn, in producing butter from the grass of the field.

The tendency of progress to persuade us to give up real things for artificial things is very striking. It is rather as if the members of a household were to decide that they would devise means of performing all their ordinary actions artificially, and thereafter there would scarcely be any necessity for them to get out of bed. It would be a game of which they would soon tire. Boys take enormous pleasure in making a telephone by means of a length of taut thread, but if some fairy were to doom them to speak to each other by even the most perfect telephone, and by that alone, they would take it in very bad part and say it wasn't fair and that they didn't mind going to a lot of trouble for the sake of a game but didn't want the game to last for ever. They do not mind pretending that they are separated when they know that they can abandon the pretence at any moment, but they would have a very violent objection to being neither separated nor together, and that is what the telephone tends to do for people.

It only tends to do it, of course, and even letter-writing tends to do the same, but now we are going to have television as well as telephony, that is to say scientists are going to give us a substitute for presence, so that we will be in a position to be separated from a friend and with him at the same time. A letter just wafts to

us a little of the personality of a loved one, or does not, according to his capacity for letter-writing, and a conversation on the telephone with him causes a thrill in us or does not according to his conversational powers. But if he is just hopeless at writing a letter and a perfect jelly-fish in the matter of talking, we reconcile ourselves to the separation as well as we can. But scientists appear now to be endeavouring, by providing a spurious presence, to make separation virtually impossible, and will I dare say go to an extraordinary amount of trouble to bring people home artificially from the ends of the earth when the same thing would be achieved if the people just stayed at home. If it were all the same whether people were at the ends of the earth or at home there would be no such thing as home, and even though we could call on anyone we liked they would see us but they would not be at home to us. The eyes of all of us will be more or less on the ends of the earth, and if ever we cast our eyes down from the television receiver we will see the strangest places we ever saw in our lives and have marvellous adventures in our own lands. In the ordinary way, the farther we look the less we see, but science is giving us substitutes for eyes, that is to say eyes which see only distant things and not the near ones, or rather which call attention to the distant things and not to the near ones, as a child playing with a telescope takes no notice of things which are close at hand but only wants to look at far-off things until he tires of them. The telescope is of course essentially deceptive by making things which are far away seem near, and rapid communications which pretend to annihilate distance are essentially deceptive also.

In the ordinary way there are things in life which we can have and things which we cannot have, according to our situation. For example, if we live in the country we cannot expect to enjoy the pleasures of town life : if we live in the town we cannot expect to enjoy the pleasures of country life. If we are musicians we must resign ourselves to the prospect of being denied the peculiar satisfactions of the painter. If we are writers we must not be intolerably vexed because we shall never know the joy of designing a beautiful building. If we are gardeners we really must not moan because we are not in a position to exercise the arts of the carpenter. There are advantages in town life : there are also advantages in country life.* The townsman sometimes sighs for the country and the countryman for the town. Now what more simple than that the scientist shall provide substitutes for each! Let him make a

town which shall have the advantages of the country, and let him introduce the advantages of town life into the country, with the result that, as Mr. G. K. Chesterton has pointed out, the country is ceasing to be the country and the town to be the town. We are hearing a great deal at present of the desirability of brightening 'rural areas' (by which phrase newspapers now refer to the country), the brightening up to be done of course by townsmen by means of wireless sets, libraries, picture-houses and all the things from which the townsman wishes to escape when he goes to the country. If there is one thing which the country has and which the town has not, it is peace, even if only in the form of silence, and if there is one thing which the town has which the country has not, it is commotion, even if only in the form of noise. No doubt the countryman sometimes wishes that the peace of the countryside was not so peaceful, and the townsman on occasions thinks that he would find life more agreeable if there was not such a ceaseless coming and going in the streets; but when the countryman feels that he really must have a little more excitement he can go to the town, and when the townsman begins to desire above everything surcease from strife he can pay a visit to the country. But to introduce an artificial commotion into the country and an artificial calm into the town would make it impossible for the countryman to escape from the country and for the townsman to get away for a while from the town. The fact that we should have the advantages of both would not compensate for having the disadvantages of both: better to have the advantages and disadvantages of one, and the other as a resource.

Science is trying to provide us with substitutes for the things which we cannot have and for some of the things which we might have only for modern conditions. We cannot all go to the Riviera, but science provides us with an artificial sun because science has shut out the sun from us. We cannot all have mountain air, which is excellent air in its way, but science makes it for us and floods our factories and tube railways with it. We cannot all have silk apparel, but science makes it for us by machinery. We cannot all eat fresh peaches in California, but science provides them for us, in tins. We cannot all listen to chamber music, but science provides it for us artificially on the wireless and the gramophone. We might have the peace of country lanes and roads, but for the motor, so science is trying to make us all live in garden villages which are not villages. We might have furniture characteristic of

the period in which we live, but science provides us with furniture characteristic of periods in which we do not live.

It is the peculiarity of science that it seems to make us progress in all directions at the same time, like a man gradually becoming enormously fat, or a great expanding bubble. For example, I may state without fear of contradiction that tremendous strides have been made in facilities for getting from one place to another. But a thing which never seems to be noticed is that tremendous strides have also been made in the direction of obviating the necessity for getting about at all.

I mean that there is a very distinct tendency to bring everything of which he could possibly be in need to a man's door with the milk so that the necessity of his faring forth on any quest whatever will be minimised. Thus, as well as his food and so forth, music is brought to him, concerts, plays, news and all sorts of things are spoon-fed to him. And the point about all the things which are thus served up to him is that they are all in some way deficient. They are very interesting and fascinating as far as they go and as substitutes for real things, but none of them is strong, red meat. There is some principle missing from each of them. The up-to-date gramophone is an admirable reproducer of music and speech, especially chamber music, but good as it is in its way it is, as well as being a triumph of science, a confession of the failure of progress to provide people with real music. It puts people rather in the position of the little boy who gets an impression of what the circus is like by looking through a crack in the canvas of the tent. I am not directing these remarks against the gramophone as such because I wish more people realised to what a height of realism it has reached: I merely say that at best it can only provide a substitute for a real thing.

On the other hand, facilities for travel have not made us all travellers, but have made perhaps the majority of us even more static and stuck-in-the-mud than the most rustic individual. The object of travel facilities was not to enable everybody to get about more, and see more, but to enable most people to be freed of occasion for travel so that they would have more time for work. The actual travelling is concentrated in a few people who travel on behalf of the rest, and modern conditions definitely discourage travel except when one's daily work requires it, that is to say except when it is a necessity. Now travel is essentially a luxury, but to put it within the reach of all as a necessity is rather like forcing a man to eat

nothing but cake. Few people can ever be in a position to travel, that is to say to wander voluntarily from place to place, and under modern conditions those who are obliged to travel derive no particular satisfaction from doing so, and the rest remain in the same place because they are obliged to. Science provides for them the inestimable boon of being hauled in a train to their work in the morning and to their homes in the evening, and that is about all that modern travel facilities mean for them.

The fact is that it is not facilities for travel we want: it is not to make it as easy as possible; we want it to be allowed to remain difficult, for in the difficulty and hazard of real travel lies its real attraction, and in the ease of the modern substitutes for it lies its greatest weariness. There would be no thrill in getting about by means of a Magic Carpet if Magic Carpets were turned out in huge numbers by large factories at a low price, the great attraction about the Magic Carpet of fable having been that it was the only one of its kind in the world. There is not much satisfaction about a genie whom anybody can call up. There would be no thrill in being transported to Bagdad on a Magic Carpet if one met throngs of Magic Carpets on the way and noticed people rising in clouds on Magic Carpets from Bagdad itself.

It is possible that what we will have to cultivate is not efficient travel—we are cultivating that *ad nauseam*—but inefficient travel, like the travel of the baby who can scarcely stand on his legs but finds the banisters of the stairs or the doormat entrancing things. If we could only make journeys with great difficulty by means of crazy vehicles which we had made ourselves we would derive enormous satisfaction from them and be real travellers, even if we seemed travellers out of fairy tales or new Don Quixotes. The true romance of travel is contained in the words of a song, addressed by the guard of an Irish train to the driver:

‘Are ye right there, Mikey, are ye right?’

D’ye think that we’ll get there before the night?’

and the driver’s reply:

‘Sure it all depends on whether
Th’ oul ingine houlds together.’

It is possible that efficiency is really the cry of the lazy, dull man who wants everything to go well in a mechanical way because that

would save him trouble. When we are solely concerned with arriving at the place to which we are going, travel has lost most of its charm, and we have to turn to something else for adventure. For adventure consists essentially in doing things without a reason. When we travel, as we do now, in an intensely practical way, we find little or no satisfaction in it. When travelling becomes, as it has largely become, merely an item of expenditure, a sort of overhead charge which we wish to reduce as much as possible, a kind of inhuman service of which we make use, it loses almost all its glamour and poetry and becomes something sordid. We are coming to have an attitude towards travel similar to that which the business man who uses a car in his business has towards his car. He regards it as something which helps him to make money and does not, as a rule, I think, have an affectionate disposition towards it such as that of the traditional Arab towards his horse. I do not mean that every owner of a car has an altogether prosaic attitude towards his car: that is very far from my thoughts. On this matter I may say that personally I developed a strong affection for a certain rather battered little car which really seemed to me to perform wonders and which I nursed and tended and dreamed about with devotion. I mean that I know a car-owner can have a romantic feeling for his car and can know that he has a different hand with it from anyone else and that things can go wrong with it when he is not there which would not go wrong with it if he was. But that is when he plays with it: when he works with it he is inclined to hate the sight of it and just work it to the scrap-heap. I suppose it is because cars are so much used merely for money-making purposes nowadays that they are so much alike and that nobody seems to bother about giving them names or tricking them out in any individual way (although a man who wants to break a speed record or otherwise distinguish himself usually gives his car a name).

It is hard to describe the sordid attitude which has grown up towards romantic things like travel, and I am conscious that I have hardly done it. It has something to do with a lack of desire for glamour and distrust of it, a certain materialism which wishes to stop short at essentials and the obvious. I think of the railway directors who refused to allow G. F. Watts to decorate the walls of Euston station, being apparently of the opinion that the age of romance had passed, and that there was nothing in the least poetic or inspiring about a railway, that there was no idea or ideal behind a railway which would lead one to suppose that it had ever fired

anyone's imagination and that railways must be for ever strictly dissociated from human enjoyment and human genius. It is difficult to imagine anybody not gifted with an imagination succeeding in inventing anything to improve the working of a railway or a man who abjured ideas ever wanting to do anything except stick in some rut into which he had fallen. I suppose after all that the simple fact which has made travel lose much of its glamour is that it has become so safe, and so, as it were, independent of the traveller. It has become rather like walking about the house at home, where we do not as a rule anticipate danger lurking under stairs and behind doors and in chimneys. We get no particular thrill from walking from one room to another and regard the walking about as so much waste of time. We have rather the same attitude towards the efficient travel of to-day. It is a means to an end, not an end in itself. We always have strong reasons for making a journey and would not make it for its own sake ; it is so much time wasted, and we commit the romantically heretical acts of reading, writing letters, entering up our diaries and so forth in trains and on steamers. We are inclined to behave on our journeys as if we were at home and walking from one room to another in a house which we know perfectly well, not travelling because we want to but because we have to. There is nothing romantic about our journeys because we feel so much at home.

The modern substitute for travel—getting from one place to another as efficiently as possible—narrows travel down to a sort of mechanical function of society with which individuals are not greatly concerned. It emphasises a single aspect of travel, the mere getting from place to place, as if that were the only object of the traveller, and tends to deprive him of freedom to turn off his route for a while if he likes. But the true spirit of travel does not consist merely in getting from place to place as quickly as possible : it quite frequently consists more in spending as long a time as possible in getting from one place to another. The mere covering of ground is hardly any part of travel as the mere swallowing of one's food is hardly any part of eating. Modern travel thus has the characteristic quality of a substitute that it tries to make us accept the part for the whole. It is probably because we are so clever at providing ourselves with rapid communications that we must always have a very good and sufficient reason for making a journey, or rather that merely because the facilities are there we must have urgent reasons to avail ourselves of them, that because we have the facilities

at our disposal we must make use of them and we organise society so that we shall be obliged to make use of them : they make the business so easy that we would scarcely make use of them unless we were obliged to.

But it does not seem clear why, because we are very clever at making plausible imitations of all sorts of things, we should try to content ourselves with the imitations and say farewell to the originals. No doubt many a man in the past, as now, had hardly any idea in his mind when making a journey except to get to his destination, but that is no reason why we should organise our communications on the assumption that every traveller is in that particular mood. What is wrong with the world that the exceptional case of the traveller who thinks of nothing but to get to his destination as quickly as possible should be regarded as the normal ? It is a strange thing about science that it seems so taken up with producing substitutes for real things. It seems strange that science, which is supposed to be our Slave of the Lamp, should behave so much more like our Old Man of the Sea by seeming to strive to make us take seriously the game of pretending, like the boys with the taut thread, that a substitute is as good as an original, that science should seem merely to try to vaunt its own cleverness, to perpetuate substitutes as new things and in themselves original, and to visualise a world which will be a sort of huge house of cards, a wonderfully clever erection in its way but at the same time not exactly remarkable for stability or permanence. Why, because we have found out a great deal recently about natural processes, should we try to reproduce natural things by means which must of necessity be inferior ? It is all very well to say that we are defying Nature and mastering her. We undoubtedly defy Nature by many of our human arrangements and hold her at bay in many ways, but we live by Nature and can never triumph over something which is part of ourselves. Her inmost secrets, her spiritual secrets, we shall never discover, and if we do not concede to her a certain superiority we shall probably get the worst of it. Nature provides us with such a number of things that we really ought to be as happy as kings in accepting them as better than any things of the kind which we could make for ourselves. It seems waste of human energy to go to a tremendous amount of trouble to do things which Nature will do for us if we appreciate and encourage her, and sometimes even if we do neither.

THE GENIUS OF FATHER AHERN.

BY MARTIN HARE.

THERE are no friends quite like the friends that we made when we were young, and the older we get the oftener the memory of those friends is with us. I have been fortunate enough to spend the best part of my life in the South of Ireland and to have made many friends there, and of all that kindly company none is more honourably and affectionately remembered than Father Ahern.

He was a man easy, people said, to know ; he had a simplicity of speech and a geniality of temper that established intimacy almost unawares. Simple and genial he certainly was, but he was a great deal more as well ; there was a depth and a twist in him that made him wise and witty, and he was salted through and through with the native shrewdness of the Irish peasant. His was a character that like spring water sparkled on the surface but had its deep beginnings in unchanging rock, and like water it could not be held, as it were, in the hand and analysed ; it was only in the shiftings of it that one learnt to understand its nature.

There are a great many people in County Cork and outside of it who like myself are the better for remembering Cornelius Ahern, and none the less so because the thought of him inevitably brings with it a smile. In the old days we seemed to be always smiling at some fresh absurdity of his, and yet those very absurdities had a way of succeeding better than other men's sense.

I came to believe that there was in him a sort of natural genius which, while invariably leading him along the most unexpected by-paths, equally invariably brought him finally to a point far ahead of any ever reached by those reasonable persons who took the normal route. From that point he was able to take a much less restricted view of things than we were, and therein, no doubt, lay the secret of his wide humanity.

As I have said, the thought of him is often with me, and when I think of him I must always think too of the first and only Flower Show ever held in Kilmartin, both because it was the Flower Show that started our friendship and because I never saw his gifts better displayed than in his conduct of the affair, an affair which

no really reasonable man would ever have undertaken and of which nobody but a genius could have made a success.

The Show had its birth, I remember, one evening in April. I had been bidden to dine at the Rectory and, having been told to come early, I donned a dinner-jacket, that final compromise which Civilization makes with the social Desert, at a quarter past eight and set out on my twenty minutes' walk across the fields. In County Cork we are not the slaves of Time; we eat our meals when it is agreeable and not when it is conventional. And who can deny that breakfast is more agreeable at eleven o'clock than at eight, and why waste the pleasantest hours of a short April day in eating a dinner that can very conveniently be eaten later, thus helping to pass away a long and otherwise dull evening? I did not expect that they would sit down in Kilmartin Rectory until nine o'clock or after.

My knock on the door, however, brought Georgie, the youngest of the Rector's five daughters, out of the dining-room. The parlour-maid was presumably busy in the yard or the fields, so far reaching is the enthusiasm with which Irish servants undertake anybody's work but their own.

'I'm frightfully sorry,' she told me in a stage whisper, 'but dinner's nearly over. The new P.P. called this afternoon and, of course, Papa had to make him stay on! Mother said we'd have to have a proper dinner at the proper time and that I'd better head you off and explain. Will you come in now and I'll have yours brought up? They're only at the sweet, and Father Ahern talks so much that if you hurry you'll catch them up!'

I recollected various other scratch dinners at which I had assisted since I had come to this part of the world.

'Georgie,' I said, 'declare the truth. Does dinner consist of decanted soup, salmon out of a tin, a chicken which three hours ago was trustfully asleep on its roost and that peculiarly repulsive pudding known as a "shape"?''

'All that and more,' admitted Georgie. 'You haven't mentioned the bottled coffee followed by Connolly's three-and-sixpenny port.'

'Then,' said I, 'for the love of Mike let me escape into the study and send me a pot of tea and either three boiled eggs or the cold bacon and fried cabbage that I would have been having but for this unhappy priest.'

Refreshed with strong tea, hot bread and hard-boiled eggs I

later made my appearance in the drawing-room and was introduced to the new parish priest. He was a middle-aged man with an air of unquenchable optimism which had apparently come unscathed through even that frightful dinner. With his full face, beaming blue eyes and ready tongue he presented the greatest possible contrast to the lean, tall Rector with his detached manner and face of melancholy humour.

'I believe you've been working in Bandon,' I said to him. 'I wonder if you'll find Kilmartin dull?'

'I'm sure I won't, thank ye,' said he. 'I'm a country man meself be rights and country life is what I like best in the world. Not but what Kilmartin does seem a quiet sort of a place—it's a place that could be developed though, I fancy. Amn't I right, Mr. Graves?'

'H'm,' said the Rector. It was his favourite remark and committed him to nothing, but Father Ahern understood it none the less.

'You don't think so? Well, I'm only a new-comer and, of course, you should know; I'm told you've been Rector here for over twenty years. That's a long time.'

'Well, long enough to learn what can't be done.' The Rector half smiled, half sighed.

Father Ahern, if dashed, did not take long to recover.

'Develop is too big a word perhaps, for what I was wanting to say. I just had it in mind that a little instruction in up-to-date bee-keeping say, or weaving, or something of that sort might be an advantage to the young people. You know how conservative they are in a place like this and how they stick to the old slow ways.'

I looked at his earnest, cheerful face and realised with the words 'bee-keeping' and 'weaving' what manner of man had come amongst us. We had been delivered into the hands of that most dangerous of fanatics, the man with a passion for organising.

'Has anyone ever started the Co-operative movement here?' he inquired next.

'O yes,' said the Rector, 'every new curate, both of your side and mine, that has come to the parish in the last fifteen years, has started the Co-operative movement; that is the first duty of a curate in this part of County Cork. Churchill here,' nodding to me, 'was the first to break the tradition—he's an Englishman and doesn't understand the amount of fun the people get out of it.'

The priest's eye met the Rector's with a glance as keen as that gentleman's own.

'Ah, now it's having a joke out of me: you are, Mr. Graves,' he observed genially, and I perceived that if he was a crank he was a shrewd one and one whose leg even the Rector would find it difficult to pull.

Once mounted on his hobby-horse, however, there was no getting him out of the saddle. A Debating Society was the next thing that occurred to him for the improvement of Kilmartin.

'But there is a Debating Society already,' said Ralph Graves with his gentle smile, 'if one could but persuade the members to debate. Unfortunately the only things we consider worth fighting about are politics and religion, and they are debarred by the rules of the Society. To tell you the truth, Father, I don't think we are sufficiently intellectual for a Debating Society to hold us on its own merits, although as an opportunity for playing "Twenty Five" and "Pitch and Toss" its meetings were once extremely popular.'

The Rector, who was one of the best men I have ever known, had the gift of being also one of the most aggravating when in an impish mood. So discouraging was he that Mrs. Graves and I felt it our duty to rally round the unfortunate visitor and, like many other persons who have rashly attempted to smooth out the present, shortly found ourselves involved for the future in a manner particularly uncongenial to us both.

He had suggested so many things and they had all been so promptly annihilated by the Rector that I am sure Mrs. Graves had not the smallest idea what it was she was supporting when she exclaimed with that peculiar and quite spurious vivacity socially incumbent on the wives of clergymen:

'Upon my word, that's a great idea, Father Ahern. There's nothing I'd like better, it would do us all a great deal of good. Take no notice of that husband of mine; Mr. Churchill and I will back you up.'

She then returned in her own mind, again after the habit of clergymen's wives, to whatever was really interesting her at the moment, and when she once more became aware of the conversation it was too late. The trap was sprung, the organising demon within Father Ahern was to be satisfied, we were to have a Flower Show in Kilmartin.

'Better,' said the Rector weakly, 'call it a Regatta. That is

if you want anybody to attend it.' The sheer idiocy of the project seemed to have taken his spirit away, for this was his only comment, and for him it was a feeble shaft. As a matter of fact, for some mysterious reason to label a fixture of any sort a 'Regatta' does seem in West Cork to be the best way of making it a success, and that although everybody is well aware beforehand that not a single event will take place anywhere but on land. This I cannot explain; it is one of the minor problems of Irish psychology.

To attempt to get up a Flower Show in Kilmartin seemed to me the most completely insane plan that any man could have conceived, yet, so weak do we become in other people's drawing-rooms, I found it impossible to say so and sat in stunned and apparently acquiescent silence while the rosy floods of Father Ahern's optimism flowed eloquently over us. Meantime I speculated apprehensively as to what share of the arrangements would devolve on me; that I should not be allowed to escape I felt certain, for your really rabid organiser can cow even the strong-minded, and in such matters I am not strong-minded at all. I am not one of those admirable characters whose 'no' on such occasions means 'no'; on the contrary, my 'no,' if I do find courage to utter it, always leads in the end to precisely the same results as my 'yes.' Nobody, in fact, waits for my answer at all; they know that however I may protest I will eventually be found raffling cushions, handing out beán-bags, reciting *Gunga Din*, or otherwise martyring myself in whatever way I have been ordered to do. So, although all my common sense told me that a Flower Show in Kilmartin would be about as practicable as a ploughing-match in Piccadilly, I was fatalistically aware that before long I would be taking an active part in getting one up.

'First of all,' said Father Ahern with enjoyment, 'we must form a Commytee. Now there'll be Mrs. Graves, of course, if she'll be so kind, and then there'll be yerself, Mr. Churchill, and there's meself, that's three, and if we were to get three more wouldn't that be enough? Sure Commytees is like families, the smaller they are the easier they're managed. Stop, though, we'll want a Chairman. Will ye be the Chairman, Mr. Churchill, now, or will I? All right, I'll do it, sure 'tis a job I'm well used to, and then there'll be yeer two selves on the Commytee and four others we'll beat up through the parish. Now, is that agreeable to all?'

We intimated faintly that it was agreeable and he took a deep breath and went on.

'Twill make all the difference to us if we get a good Commytee and, as ye know yerselves, a good Commytee will be a queer hard thing to get. We'll have every mortal man in the place wanting to be on it and bitter offence there'll be if we pick out some and pass others by. Now, I'll let ye into what I've always found a good plan—we'll give out that every member of the Commytee has to guarantee a certain sum, a pound maybe or whatever we fix on, towards the funds, and there won't be a man jack of them willing to do that. Then we'll go quietly, ye understand, to the four we have in mind and tell each of them that in his case we'll be glad to accept kind instead of the money, and he can give us a day's work or the like of that and 'twill be all the same and nobody to know. That way we'll be sure of getting the four we want and no offence given, only contentment all round.' He paused again and beamed with Machiavellian satisfaction.

'Now that,' murmured the Rector, 'is what I call masterly. Quiet but deadly. What ails them at all in Rome, Father, that they haven't made a bishop of you before this?'

Father Ahern waved his hand as one who would say 'all in good time,' and continued.

'Now as to who the four will be I'll be leaving to ye, Mrs. Graves, and this good young man. For yourselves will know the people in a way I couldn't and I no more than six weeks in the parish. Let ye decide it between ye and I'll agree to whatever ye say.'

'But, Father,' said I, grasping at a straw, 'I'm practically a stranger here myself. I really don't think I'll be any good to you at all. You know, you'd much better get somebody to help you who understands the people and all that. Why, I'd never set foot in Ireland until two years ago.'

'Don't believe him, Father,' said the Rector. 'It's more like three years since he came, to begin with, and into the bargain he's more than half an Irishman himself; in fact, he's as good as two-thirds of one, for his mother was one of the Frenches and he's the white-headed boy of every old man and woman in the barony. You couldn't get a better man to help you, so don't listen to any of those excuses.'

'Sure, I knew he was only joking,' said the priest, smiling benevolently upon me, and I perforce grinned back at him, and decided that I might as well make the best of it. It was difficult to remain ungracious in the face of so much good nature and the

blend of sheer goodness and child-like enthusiasm that shone from his blue eyes.

None the less, I did not think we would find four people in Kilmartin who would join us out of any purer motives than a wish to oblige Father Ahern and myself and an inability to refuse the temptation of being on a committee. There is something in an Irishman that finds its highest expression on a committee and the position is always a coveted one, involving, usually, no weightier obligation than much speech-making and passing of resolutions. Here, by the way, was shown the cunning of Father Ahern in proposing to ask a definite subscription from would-be members; he was well aware that Irishmen though romantic are not sentimental and fully appreciate the just proportion to be preserved between hard cash and such purely æsthetic pleasures. The mention of the subscription would successfully safeguard us against all but the four on whose help we should privately decide. Who the four were to be I had, as I have said, no idea; I could not imagine that there was anybody in Kilmartin except Father Ahern himself who would contemplate a Flower Show with the smallest degree of favour.

Kilmartin is one of those scattered parishes so frequently met with in Ireland. About six by eight miles in extent it lies in the remotest region of that remotest region of County Cork, which is vaguely and somewhat contemptuously spoken of as 'the West.' It is ringed about with hills and few strangers are seen on the deeply rutted roads. The tilled soil is light and the grasslands moss-bound and choked with furze; the long-lipped Munster cattle graze scantily between the stones, and the hardy, light-hearted Munster peasants are satisfied if there is enough of stirabout and potatoes. The great houses of the parish are deserted; French-court of my mother's people is a blackened ruin and Gortnamuckla of the O'Hara's stands shuttered and cold, its long rows of stables doorless and roofless, its pleasure grounds and gardens overgrown to the height of a man's head.

The lords of the land have given up the long unequal struggle and are consuming their own hearts in far-away places; the peasants still wring from it a bare, unwilling livelihood, and between these two the 'strong' farmers have lifted up their horns. And in spite of all the nonsense that has been written, said and sung to the contrary, there is nobody in all this world so practical, so completely hard-headed and materially minded as the Irish

farmer who has a little money in his pocket and means to have more.

One could not be called a pessimist for doubting that in such a field Father Ahern would find four enthusiasts like himself.

Enthusiasm, however, is catching, especially to women. Mrs. Graves was becoming infected, I could see, although as a clergyman's wife of many years' standing she must have had frequent and shattering experience of how dangerous enthusiasm can be. She nodded her head abstractedly when I got up, saying firmly that I must go, and the last words I heard were :

'There's Miss O'Hara, we must have her, and be sure you ask her before you so much as mention it to anyone else or she'll never forgive either you or me—then there's your own schoolmaster, let him make a few speeches now and then and he'll work like a Trojan—and then, let me see—'

I heard next day that they had arranged for Father Ahern to call on his victims immediately, taking me with him as a buffer in case of possible difficulties. I spent a week in the apprehension of seeing his smart horse and trap outside my lodgings and fled precipitately out the back door on about five occasions, each of which turned out to be a false alarm. When he did actually come I was ignominiously asleep over the fire and for shame's sake had to jump up and display the greatest vigour and readiness for action when he stamped, beaming and ruddy from the air, into my little sitting-room. Before long we were bowling along the road towards Ahaloe, the market town some ten miles distant from Kilmartin village.

We were agreed that our first visit must be to Miss O'Hara, and neither Father Ahern nor I felt particularly enlivened at the prospect. Father Ahern had never met the lady and I had met her but twice in the three years that I had spent in Kilmartin. She never paid visits because she could not afford to return the compliment to her entertainers ; in fact, it was said that she never really had enough to eat. She was the great aunt of the last O'Hara to live at Gortnamuckla, and when he had thrown in his hand and departed with the rest of the family she had refused to accompany them, preferring, metaphorically speaking, death to exile. For to her proud spirit it must have been little short of living death to decline from Gortnamuckla to the tiny terrace house in Ahaloe and to substitute one town-bred orphan for the hosts of soft-tongued, kindly servants who, born and bred on her father's land, had

surrounded her all her life. She was cut off from the county because she could no longer lead it and her unbending pride would not allow her to take a lower place ; among the people of the town she could no more make friends than a fish can breathe out of water. The simple country peasants she could understand and love, but the prosperous shopkeepers and other middle-class people who made up 'society' in Ahaloe were for her simply non-existent ; she could have as easily established contact with some tribe of Darkest Africa.

'I'm no lady's man at any time and old maids put the fear of God on me,' said Father Ahern unhappily as we stood on her doorstep, waiting for the door to open. 'Hardly if I'll be able to talk to her at all ! I'll be destroyed altogether if she gives me a little china cup of tea.'

I was about to assure him unkindly that she most certainly would when the door opened and the orphan bade us enter, and with much loud breathing deposited us in a sitting-room so tiny and so full of fragile things that Father Ahern and I would have undoubtedly fled but that Miss O'Hara was even then descending the stairs.

She entered the room and a shaft of April sunlight falling on her made her seem like a little bloodless ghost, so frail was she in her black dress, so colourless and cold her lips and hair. I am not ordinarily prone to sentiment, but the sight of her gave me, quite simply, an ache in the heart.

'How d'ye do, Mr. Churchill,' said she, giving me her hand. 'It is very kind of you to come and see me and to bring Father Ahern.' She bowed very graciously as I presented him and his nervousness visibly lessened. At the same time we were an uncomfortable pair sitting respectively on a gilt-legged almost backless chair and a sort of hassock affair covered with lumpy needlework and afflicted with dry rot in its quite inadequate claw feet. Our conversation was as unnatural and uninspired as might be expected of two large men under such circumstances.

Tea came, as anticipated, in little china cups, and no doubt I looked as ludicrous to Father Ahern as he did to me, endeavouring to take elegant sips and not to swallow at one gulp cup and saucer and tiny apostle spoon. Accompanying it was bread and butter so unsubstantial that it was almost impossible to pick it up, and it made us both unhappy to see how Miss O'Hara looked from the plate to us in an agony lest there should not be enough. If we

had dared we would not have eaten at all, but there was something about Miss O'Hara, keenly felt but impossible to express, that effectually checked such impertinence on our part. It is best expressed in the irreverent phrase of Georgie Graves, who, in speaking of her to me, once said, 'never have I seen anybody who looks so much like an ancestress!'

But for Father Ahern I daresay I should be sitting there still, prolonging my lady-like conversation and taking lady-like sips at renewed cups of tea. I could never have attempted to arouse enthusiasm of any sort in that attenuated shadow of a woman, so completely without warmth did she seem, so emptied of everything except the chill necessity of living out her days and keeping her hurts hidden from the world. The optimism of Father Ahern, however, recked nothing of such fanciful stuff as this. The only concession he made to her personality was in lacking the courage to invite her to be one of half a dozen others on a committee; instead he there and then invented a position suitably unique and begged her to be our Patron.

'God knows,' said he impressively and with a persuasiveness that belied his alleged fear of maiden ladies, 'twill be a grand word for us, "under the patronage of Miss O'Hara."'

Of course she agreed; Father Ahern was a difficult man to refuse.

'Although, of course, you understand that I can really do very little beyond allowing you to use my name, and although I do not underestimate the effect of that, I am aware that in a small place like this you require workers on your list. And I am past anything of that sort, Father Ahern; I am an old woman now and I entertain so little and so seldom go into the world!'

The greatest difficulty, I felt, would not be to find workers, but to find exhibitors, and I said so.

'I'm afraid you're right,' admitted Father Ahern sadly. 'The people hereabouts aren't altogether too fond of gardening.'

'My dear man,' said I with some impatience, 'they're not only not fond of it, they never even think about it! Can you possibly imagine a single man in Kilmartin bending his back to pull a weed, let alone anything else? Why, it's all they can do to spray their potato gardens a couple of times in the year to keep the blight off them. No, gardening's a lot too hot and heavy for our Kilmartin friends; lying on their backs in the sun in the summer and picking up and passing on a succession of unsound horses in the winter is a great deal more up to their weight.'

'You may be right,' said Father Ahern cheerfully, 'and in faith, I think ye are. But sure Flower Show is only a name when all's said and done. What's to stop us having other things besides flowers? There's horse lepping we could have and sheep-dog trials, maybe, and a bicycle race and prizes for home-made bread.'

'And roulette tables and Wheels of Fortune,' added I mentally, 'and a few tierces of porter. And then call the affair a Regatta and get some extra police drafted into Kilmartin for the day.' I did not utter this aloud, which I rather regretted later when I saw my thoughts being fulfilled almost to the letter.

A faint wistfulness passed over Miss O'Hara's face.

'I should be sorry for the Flower Show to be given up,' she said. 'I allow myself one weakness in my old age, Father Ahern, and that is my flowers. I would have liked to send some specimens to your Show. I have a few really fine plants which came with me from my old home.'

'Well, now, and isn't that grand?' demanded Father Ahern. 'Could anything be better? We'll have the flowers, surely, whatever else we have, and yerself and I will beat up enough exhibitors to make one good tent or stall, or whatever it'll be. I'll write to me friends around Bandon and between us we'll manage it, never fear. I'm not sure would it do for me to be entering anything as I'm the one that's getting up the whole thing, but it'll be different altogether for you and, what's more, we'll get Mackenzie's in Cork to send down one of their men for the judging, so there'll be no question of fear or favour in it. We'll have flowers to please ourselves and all the other attractions to please the local people and Mr. Churchill, and that way 'twill be a great success and everyone'll be pleased.'

Father Ahern was always anticipating that everyone would be pleased. It is, no doubt, a comfortable state of mind. He and Miss O'Hara, certainly, were both highly pleased; they shared, it now appeared, a passion for gardening. It was just what I should have expected in Father Ahern, but it surprised me in Miss O'Hara. I had supposed her incapable of passion of any kind and I said as much to the priest as we were driving home.

The priest turned about in his rugs and looked at me with the twinkling eyes of experience.

'Young man,' said he, 'we're passionate, foolish creatures, we men and women, and it dies hard in us, so it does. That unfortunate poor lady might have more passion in her than ye'd think. Sure

there was a wildness always in the O'Hara's, and wildness stays in the blood.'

But wildness of any sort, even in that form which undoubtedly afflicts the amateur gardener, seemed so entirely incompatible with Miss O'Hara that I paid no more attention to this than I did to most of the other extravagances of Father Ahern.

I was not present when he enlisted his next helper, the schoolmaster, who was to consider himself well rewarded by being allowed to make a speech now and then, so I am not quite sure whether the schoolmaster held out for further compensation or whether it was Father Ahern's own idea that the elder children of the school should be invited to present a tableau, preferably historic. I incline to the opinion that Father Ahern was the author of the plan; the schoolmaster surely could not have looked on his elder pupils day after day without realising the effect they would produce in an historic tableau.

At any rate, if Father Ahern were not primarily responsible for that he was responsible for many other flights of fancy and the features of our prospective Flower Show became more and more freakish as the weeks went on. Notably so when Mr. Fitzmaurice was added to our select committee, making up the four which we had finally decided would be sufficient support for the Chairman and the Patron.

Mr. Fitzmaurice, more widely known as Fitzy, was a brilliant member of that section of society which cannot fitly be confined either to the drawing-room or the stable, and possesses the attributes of both to a confusing degree. He was, although she would never have granted it, related and not too remotely to the unimpeachable Miss O'Hara and, it has to be admitted, to myself; and at the same time my own yard boy, in common with many other doubtful characters, was wont to allude to him, not too enthusiastically, as 'that tricky little fella Fitzy, a mother's cousin of me own.' 'Tricky' is a pleasing word which exactly fits the gay and good-looking and quite unprincipled Mr. Fitzmaurice; involving 'tricky' it does not stop there, but adds to the uncompromising English word a quality Irish and debonair. In this gentleman's hands Father Ahern placed the arrangements for the 'horse lepping,' and it was but the natural outcome of this that 'Pig and Pole' should be included in the programme; 'Pig and Pole,' it may be mentioned, is a crude and consequently popular pastime consisting

of swarming, or attempting to swarm, up a greased pole for the prize of a piece of bacon which graces the top. Knowing Fitzzy I felt sure that on the day itself he would also be responsible, as evening came on, for much uproarious withdrawal into darkened tents and the consequent indulgence in such sports as 'Are you there, Mike?' accompanied by appropriate giggling and holding of hands.

As my apprehension increased, so, apparently, did the enthusiasm of Father Ahern. He was sublimely indifferent to the fact that his projected Flower Show was not to be a Flower Show at all; he would not really have objected if it had turned out to be a circus so long as it entailed a great deal of rushing about and much writing of letters and frequent alterations of plan. These are the things on which your true organiser thrives. Not so was it with Miss O'Hara, whom I met about three weeks before the great day in Ahaloe. Her whole interest in the affair was centred in the carnations that she intended to show. With an excitement which she vainly tried to conceal she confided in me that she believed she could not fail to win first prize.

How oddly life alters us, thought I, philosophising after the somewhat heavy manner of youth. Miss O'Hara had seen the world; ordinarily the so-called Flower Show at Kilmartin would have been as negligible to her as Cowes and Goodwood, say, were to Father Ahern. If she had been at home at Gortnamuckla she would no doubt have felt it incumbent on her to put in an hour's appearance early in the afternoon when everybody was bored and sober, but that would have been all. Now here in Ahaloe, starved of all those things that had once made her world so fair, she was happy only when she was gardening and had laboured all the summer to produce the carnations with which she hoped to win a pair of pen-painted vases or an American clock at this self-same show. At the very mention of it her worn face became positively beatified.

This was at the end of July, and the Flower Show was fixed for August the fourteenth. It must have been about the ninth when I met Miss O'Hara again.

'How are the carnations?' I asked. Her face quivered.

'Ah, Mr. Churchill, I've had a terrible disappointment. A dog jumped over the wall last night, such a wretched little wall as it is, right on to my loveliest blooms. I can't tell you what I felt when I pulled up my window this morning—I always just look out at

them before I get dressed—and saw them broken and spoilt. I don't believe I'll have any fit to show now after all.'

I was immensely sorry for her as she hurried away, winking her old eyes very fiercely, but I was too much harried by Father Ahern during the next few days to remember her again until the actual day of the Show dawned. Father Ahern, 'Fitzy' and I met in the chilly ante-breakfast atmosphere of the big field where the tents, et cetera, should have been erected the night before by some volunteers from the village. I don't think any of us seriously expected to find anything done and we were certainly not surprised when we did not; Father Ahern indeed had ordered breakfast for three before leaving his house, he told us. So we thankfully adjourned to bacon and eggs, and looking out the window on to Father Ahern's garden I remembered Miss O'Hara and her disappointment.

'But that turned out all right in the end,' said Father Ahern. 'Didn't I tell you? She called here when I was out yesterday afternoon; she'd driven out from Ahaloe in Jacksy Jamesy's covered car and she wanted to see me to make some arrangements for to-day, and when I didn't come in she left a message for me that she was in great heart altogether, there wasn't as much damage done to her flowers as she'd thought and she's still in hopes of getting the prize. Indeed, she'll be a pity if she doesn't for she's greatly set on it—'

'Ye're not showing anything yerself, Father?' said Fitzy, picking his teeth and yawning.

'I'm not. I thought 'twas better not, seeing it's me own show, as ye might say. I'm sorry in a way, for the garden's in grand order, the gladiolis and carnations have done better than good with me, the soil's that sandy. When this day is over maybe I'll have time to look at them.'

As he spoke he was opening his letters and now consternation appeared on his face.

'Well, if that doesn't beat Banagher!' said he. 'What do you think should happen but for the National Board to be sending us a man to-day of all days in the year to inspect the schools! Well, thank God, anyhow, it's not one of the women that's coming—there'll be some way of showing sense to a man even if he is an inspector.'

'My dear man,' said I, 'you know very well that inspectors have no way of recognising sense even when it is shown to them—'

they have the inspectorial mind. Besides, with all due respect to you, what exactly do you mean by sense on this occasion ?'

Schools in Ireland, be it understood, were in those days controlled by what was known as the National Board of Education, a dodo-like institution which has come in for so much criticism generally that it shall be spared here. Its curious system was to maintain in each parish separate schools for Protestants and Catholics, each respectively being under the 'management' of the Rector and the Parish Priest who, invested with almost complete authority, were troubled by a proportionate sense of responsibility. If an inspector's report were unfavourable it was the manager who felt the disgrace much more than the teacher, although the teacher was paid his salary for the purpose of gratifying inspectors and the 'manager's' position was a purely honorary affair.

'It's all right for me,' I continued ; 'it'll be the Rector's job to show him round and to lunch him, etc., but what will you do with your curate away ? The man will die of offence if you don't accompany him with full honours.'

'Accompany him ?' said Father Ahern sombrely. 'And where to ? Haven't I given the whole school a holiday for the day, and aren't the master and Standard Eight to be Conor MacNessa and his Red Branch Knights or some such tomfoolery for us this afternoon ?'

'Will we kidnap him for you ?' enquired Fitzy with the levity of the layman. 'We could keep him twenty-four hours hidden away in the mountains or some other strategy.'

'Ah, don't be talking, ye little fool,' said Father Ahern with pardonable irritation.

This appeared to all hands to close the discussion and we rose from the table leaving the inspector, so to speak, still in the air. We had much to occupy us, and it seemed most unlikely that the Show would be anything like ready to open at two o'clock as announced.

'Sure, what harm ?' said Father Ahern largely. 'The people can wait.' It was the organising of the affair that his soul loved, for the public who were to attend it he had much the same fine contempt as every Huntsman in his secret heart has for the Field.

Let me say at once that the Flower Show was everything that I had expected and a good deal more ; it was rowdy, it was quite unlike a Flower Show, it was attended by as motley a crowd as could well be imagined ; it was also from start to finish an uproarious

success. Father Ahern was wreathed in smiles, which were not dispelled even by the sight of the inspector, a large and melancholy man with lemon-coloured whiskers, who amazingly equipped with a Judge's badge appeared early in the proceedings in the wake of Fitzzy. Miss O'Hara, whose exhibit of carnations had been unhesitatingly awarded first prize by the young man from Mackenzie's, was all animation and condescension.

An Irish crowd cannot do things by halves ; there is something in Irish blood that must go to extremes. I have seen crowds of many kinds in other countries, patient crowds, sullen crowds, even hungry crowds, but I have never seen elsewhere such sinister crowds nor such light-hearted ones as I have seen in Dublin and Cork. The crowd at Kilmartin Flower Show that day was light-hearted enough in all conscience ; that element which found its leader in Fitzzy might also have been called light-headed. Even the melancholy school inspector became infected and recklessly invited Georgie Graves to seek with him the 'cup that cheers' ; possibly he later went so far as to offer her some sugar with some original remarks about sweets for the sweet.

Undoubtedly it was Father Ahern's day. He moved about in the crowd, talking and laughing with everyone he met and apparently enjoying himself to the top of his bent. I personally was not enjoying myself at all ; there are times when my mother's blood in me asserts itself, but on occasions such as this I am purely English. There is something in me which totally refuses to revel. The heat of the afternoon was intense and the clothing of most of the people present entirely unsuitable. Strong country women wilted visibly under the weight of the long dark-blue hood-cloaks of Munster. These hood-cloaks are graceful and dignified, they set off a handsome figure and are kind to an indifferent one, they are worn only by married women and are rightly considered to be their pride and glory, made as they are of the very best of woollen material and often handed down from mother to daughter ; it will be a thousand pities if the custom of wearing them ever dies out, but there is no disguising the fact that they are most confoundedly hot. Still more distressed were those who had attained to the magnificence of a 'dolman,' a much admired garment constructed of sealskin, or possibly its counterfeit, and appropriately trimmed with jet and bugles. The men for the most part fared better, being less ceremonially attired and not restricted by convention from freely wiping their faces and necks ; a few unfortun-

ates creaked about on the outskirts in that hottest of all costumes, breeches and boots and leggings, and unhappily inspected crochet and other insipid exhibits, obviously convinced that to mingle with the crowd would mean immediate apoplexy. Altogether, taking it by and large, Kilmartin Flower Show could not have been called a dress affair. Miss O'Hara and the Rector's daughters were the sole representatives of Rank, in dresses reminiscent of what I dimly remembered to have seen women wearing about five years earlier, and Fashion was painfully misinterpreted by the sisters of Fitzy and a carload of young persons from Bandon.

Like other torments it wore to an end. At ten o'clock Father Ahern and I together left the scene; what had that morning been a green field was trampled into the likeness of a ploughed one. Tent poles stripped of their tents stuck up idiotically into the air, an indescribable welter of food, crockery, musical instruments and a hundred and one other things was piled under tarpaulin, and the inevitable chaos of torn papers, blowing in every direction, added a crowning horror of rakishness to the sordid picture.

'Father,' said I, 'you're a very remarkable man.'

He screwed up his eyes and said nothing; in silence we strolled along between the green banks of the little bohieren that ran down to the presbytery. I heard him chuckle quietly to himself in the dusk.

'It's the inspector I'm thinking of,' he elucidated. 'Did Fitzy tell ye the tale about him?'

'What was that?' I asked.

'Well, Fitzy said this morning, "Let ye leave the inspector to me," and so I did; to tell the truth I forgot every bit about him till I saw him come in and he wearing a Judge's badge! "What's the meaning of that?" says I to Fitzy, and I thought he'd have died with the laughing. What in the world had he done only to meet the innocent poor man outside of Mr. Graves' school and tell him that I'd sent him over. Then he tells him all about the Show and what a grand affair it was to be, "And Father Ahern," says he, "has heard that much about your knowledge of poultry that nothing would do him but to give the school a half holiday in the hopes that he'd persuade yerself to be judging whatever chickens and hens will be in it!" Upon my word Fitzy is a foxy boy, and was there ever the like of him for having information? I declare if a man talked in his sleep Fitzy would know it?'

'The inspector really is mad on poultry then?'

'Mad!' said Father Ahern. 'Mad is it? Bedad, he's fit to be tied!' His voice was the voice of one who had suffered much from the inspector's hobby.

The tale of Fitzzy's diplomacy would have given me more pleasure if I had not had something else on my mind that was very far, I felt, from being a joke. I could not decide whether to tell Father Ahern or not. I was still wondering when we reached his garden gate.

'Stand here a minute,' said he. 'D'ye smell those flowers? sweet, aren't they, after the heat of the day? Now that this business is over I'm hoping to get a bit of work done in the garden.'

'Haven't you been in it lately?' I asked.

'Not for more than a week, I suppose. Will we go round it now?'

'As it happens I was round it last night and the night before,' I said. 'I don't know if I ought to say anything or not, Father, but perhaps there's an explanation, and if there is it'd be a great relief to me to hear it.'

'What's the matter at all?' said Father Ahern tranquilly.

'Just this,' I said bluntly. 'I believe—at least, I can't help thinking—that the carnations Miss O'Hara showed to-day weren't her own at all but yours. I've been noticing those of yours for weeks, they're so uncommon with the dark line all round the edge. The night before last I noticed them specially as I went home from here, and then last night I was awfully surprised to see you'd hardly one left. Then to-day Miss O'Hara wins the prize with some St. Clair Amos; at the time I was thinking about something else and only vaguely noticed them. Afterwards I went back to look at them, and I thought, "By Jove, those are the same as Father Ahern had"; and then, I don't quite know how, it flashed into my mind there was something queer about it. I've seen Miss O'Hara's garden half a dozen times this summer and if she'd had carnations like those I'm sure I'd have noticed them, which I never have. Now you know how crazy she was to win that prize, or rather to be the one to show the best carnations—doesn't it look horribly like it when you think that she spent some time here yesterday when nobody was about, that your carnations were certainly picked sometime yesterday, and that you yourself were known to have been too busy for weeks to know what was or wasn't in the garden?'

The priest made no reply, and after a minute I went on, more or less thinking aloud. 'She must have been suddenly tempted;

a woman like Miss O'Hara couldn't possibly plan a thing like that. The opportunity just came with you being out, and I expect she was looking at the garden, saw your magnificent "St. Clairs" and simply couldn't bear it when she thought of how her own precious flowers had been destroyed. I understand in a way how it could happen, with some people, that is, with Miss O'Hara I simply don't. It's most amazing, she's absolutely the last person——'

'It usually is the last person in these amazing cases,' murmured Father Ahern. 'Otherwise, of course, they would not be so amazing.'

I looked at him sharply; I had expected incredulity, disgust, disappointment. I was certainly not prepared for whimsicality. Still less was I prepared for what he said next, and it was then that for the first time I really apprehended what I have called the genius of Father Ahern.

'My dear young man,' he said, 'Miss O'Hara, poor lady, has been too good all her life to make anything but a poor sort of a sinner now. What ye're after telling me is no surprise to me at all, sure I knew what she'd done as soon as I came home yesterday and was told the message she left for me, and I standing looking out the window at the marks of her boots in the flower-bed.'

POLYCHROMATA.

BY J. LESLIE MITCHELL.

IV. *A VOLCANO IN THE MOON.*

I.

THAT glow above the Khalig? It is the moon-rise. And the so-sudden hush? Always is there this hush at the moon-rise. I think our Polychromata turns nightly and looks with startled eyes at that mysteriousness growing to being above the Khalig walls.

A lovers' night and a lovers' moon! But no moon in the world like our Cairo's. . . . To-night they'll be questing the skies from Palais de Koubbah, but perhaps with me alone, Anton Saloney, who once watched human faith and hope and hate battle amidst those crater-mountains the many hundred thousand miles away—battle in the cause splendid beyond their own guessing, in days when the Great Shadow still lay black across the world—perhaps with me alone, the spectator, remains the memory vivid and so-shining.

Our Cairene moon—she has had the lovers other than those who kiss beneath her light! Not least of them Gellion and Freli-grath—Gellion who died of the broken heart because of her, Freli-grath who in his last hour must have sat at his study window and peered at that glow in the wonder and the doubt. . . .

II.

In dim days before the War, when I was professor of the English Literature in the Gymnasium of far Kazan, Thibaut Gellion, coming to Cairo, took to the study of the moon.

He was an astronomer with the small private means, the Gellion, a Frenchman of Frenchmen. To Egypt he came because of the health of Mme. Gellion and because the clear skies would suit the adventurings of his nights. In the little the great telescope brought from the Ardennes threatened the stars from an observatory built on the roof of a house in Palais de Koubbah, and in the less while, absorbed, Gellion had forgotten madame. He forgot her often. For she said of the stars that doubtlessly they were leaves in a

book of which *le bon Dieu* was author . . . but the first page gave her to yawn. Unlike was the little Flore, their daughter, who, knowing not God out-moded, had the childish passion for the skies.

He had but few friends in the astronomical world, the little Gellion. Cantankerous, he was the born heretic, the champion of the lost cause and the wild surmise. Yet of the strict and impartial. His enthusiasm for his heresy of the moment was but equalled by his severity in the sifting of evidence that appeared to support that heresy. As result, he never substantiated the single belief of importance, nor had ever the illusion of so doing—until the year before his death.

After three months of the moon-study in Cairo—in France he had been the Martian, a champion of the good canals—he entered into correspondence with the Bavarian herr professor, August Freligrath, and with him, though for all Germans he had the loathing, became fast friends. Herr Freligrath was of the greatest of selenographers and had long been supporter of the heretical belief that volcanic life was not extinct upon the moon. . . . I am the layman, and all the learned journals of Europe wherein they fight these battles are to me the journals closed. But of Freligrath's belief Thibaut Gellion in Cairo became the supporter enthusiastic. Both had conviction of the play of gases from the volcano in Schroter's Valley (low down there, to the right, above the moon North Pole), but their evidence and photographic records went unaccepted. . . . There was not enough of the evidence, nor was it strong enough, and like Gellion, Freligrath was of himself the severest critic.

In winter of the nineteen-thirteen the Bavarian professor—he was the widower—came to Cairo with his son, Friedrich, a boy of fifteen. Gellion and his guest passed their days and nights in the Koubbah observatory, and the kindly Mme. Gellion, who had even less respect for national animosities than she had for stars, took to her heart the boy Friedrich. He said of the star-study that it did not interest him, being hurtful to the back of the neck, and these two were the pagans disrespectful in a house of sky-worshippers.

He was the boy quick and certain and playful. Upon sight of Flore and the Nile he loved both, and never forgot either. Flore was the year younger. Dispossessed of the observatory, she took Friedrich the adventures through the bazaars, into the forbidden Black Warrens, to the far Caliphs' Tombs, to the Ghizeh

stones. They were of the young and light-hearted, yet the children of scientists both.

'When I'm grown up,' said Flore, who was a dusky child of the southland French, with the tanned cheeks and the steady eyes even then, 'I'll be as Mme. Curie. But an astronomer. In America, at Mount Wilson observatory. And discover many stars.' She had the after-thought. 'Then I'll marry Herr Friedrich, and he can do my calculations because he's so good at maths.'

They sat by the Nile, far from Koubbah, while she said this. It was the March day on the seaward-making waters, with Bulaq Bridge in the distance and the world at their feet. Athwart the sunshine spattered and drifted the occasional rain-shower. Long was Friedrich to remember Flore sitting there. But he struggled with the honesty he also possessed.

'You'll be an astronomer, but I—I'll be an engineer.' His second love, the Nile, drew him. 'I'll come to Cairo and build aqueducts and dams to drain and flush the streets each morning. And make an end of dirt and disease and cholera in those beastly Black Warrens.'

She drew the little away from him, being very woman in spite of her youth and her stars. And if you think of their love as childish you understand them not at all. 'But how can we live at Mount Wilson, then?'

He was miserable, but honest still, and you see him, the tow-headed German boy with the puzzled blue eyes, looking from Flore to the Nile. He made the halting confession. 'I do not know.'

There was the silence when his world cracked, then a movement, and a tanned cheek against his. 'Perhaps Koubbah will do for my telescope.' She sighed a little, abandoning Mount Wilson. 'And I'll love to come and look at your dams.'

'And I at your stars,' he said, and kissed her. A shadow fell on them and the sunshine was suddenly obscured. Flore jumped to her feet.

'We'll have to run. Look at the water glimmering under Bulaq Bridge. There's a storm coming down the Nile.'

III.

Six months later, when the War broke out, the Freligraths were back again in Bavaria. The Gellions were at Alexandria, having moved there for the hot weather, and on the first ship that would

take him Thibaut Gellion, patriot, was hasting across the troubled Mediterranean of those days to the help of his France. On the day he sailed Flore's mind was troubled with the terrible imagining.

'My father, if you met Herr Fre McGrath or—or Friedrich—what would you do?'

'Shoot the animal,' he said, and did not smile.

So dim those days—God mine, we may hardly believe them! Least of all that insanity of the hate and vituperation which cloaked Europe like the miasma. None of us escaped its poison. Not even the science, experimental science, most selfless and international of things, was free. All over the world in the scientific journals rose the wild accusation and the foolish challenge. . . . In that lunatic world a German could write the article, in the responsible science gazette, accusing the English of mathematical inability or the deliberate falsifying of their biological experiments—and be believed! Of such cases were many, and of their class were the war-writings of Thibaut Gellion.

He found himself in France too old for the soldiering. While he pestered the ministries for employment he furnished the French gazettes with articles on the dishonesty and stupidity of the German astronomers. At the last he even published an attack on Herr Fre McGrath as the liar and cheat.

No frontier is barrier to hate, and in Bavaria that article was read by August Fre McGrath, friend and colleague of Liebknecht, one of the two public men of Germany who had tried to keep the peace.

IV.

At the length, in the nineteen-eighteen, December, Thibaut Gellion, hospital-worker, returned to Cairo to find his wife dead and Flore, up-grown and of the strange, still holding the house in Koubbah with the aid of her nurse, Mathilde.

Almost the physical wreck came back the little Gellion, and but slowly could his mind turn to the skies and the forgotten stars. He sat amazed and furious in the Koubbah house over the terms of peace and the re-admittance of the German animals to the councils of civilisation.

But he might not long resist the lure of his observatory. Flore, who in the years of his absence had made of herself the competent selenographer, became again his assistant. She found her father one strangely altered. There were the long periods when he was

the student, quick and sceptical, but those broken by the dark spells when mind and soul seemed to forsake his body. It was as though some shadow wavered across his days—the shadow to her incomprehensible. Unanticipated, mysterious, it would fall and darken even his happiest hour.

Spite all her pity and all her horror, Flore had looked on the War with clear eyes. It was the stupidity; and now it was over, and one might hope and dream again. A week after the return of her father she wrote a letter to Friedrich Freligrath, sending him the greetings and remembrances. I think her heart went with that letter, that shy, wistful calling of the boy's name across the gulf of four nightmare years.

The letter was never answered.

V.

On some infrequent portions of the dark side of the moon is not always the darkness. In the drunken tilt and libration of the satellite as it swings around our world come the occasions when one at the powerful telescope may glimpse uncharted lands ere these swing back again into the darkness for the long periods.

In survey of that shadow-land Thibaut Gellion sought to find his old self—as Flore sought forgetfulness of the wound to her young, proud heart. Hour by hour, in the full-moon glow, they would chart and photograph and sketch.

Then presently the happening unexpected—the night when her father, with the amazement in his voice, called Flore to the telescope, and in the little observatory of Koubbah were the strained hours of watching and the hasty erection of camera apparatus. Next night was the same, the while the telescope eye hung above a minute edge of the lunar disc, where the dazzling whiteness of day on the moon fell sheerly off into utter darkness and a snow of stars. On that edge of disc was a crater-mountain, uncharted and little observed. It tilted sunwards, and also almost full to the earth, and far within its towering walls was a drifting smudge like the smoke from a cigarette.

They were looking across the lifeless wastes at the first active volcano indisputable upon the moon.

VI.

So Gellion was convinced, for, unlike the volcanoes he had once suspected in the Schroter's Valley, it was evidently a crater in the

eruption violent and continuous. Yet to the proof of its existence in the astronomical world were the difficulties most desperate. There was no measuring its depths of crater-wall in the position he had seen it, and not for the uncertain period of months would that tract of the lunar land be again observable. Lying inside that borderland where were to be considered conditions and contingencies such as might well dishearten even the super-mathematician, the crater could be but seldom viewed from the earth, and even then at the different angles and power because of the approach and recession of the moon-floor. In the most moon-observations it would be altogether beyond telescopic range. . . .

Yet—to prove its existence and prophesy its reappearance would be to crown his life-work.

I can but glimpse the task enormous of the little Gellion. Later was I to make of the matter the study that I might understand a little. But that is still the little.

Yet, after the stupendous toil of a month, he completed the task of compiling a chart of periodicity—the times when the volcano inside the crater might be seen at its full and no other explanation of the smudge-phenomenon be possible.

In that month of intensive calculation and rejection occurred still the hours when the shadow mysterious fell upon him and he was approachable by none but Flore. But such moods grew the rarer with the nearing of success, and he finished his thesis with the conclusion that once in the five months the volcano-glow of the lunar crater would be clear to earthly eyes.

VII.

The day after that first momentous observation I had had with Flore the encounter in the bazaars. It was Ramadan, and we were both the strayed and foolish spectators of a procession Muslim. For the little it seemed that El Azhar was to cut our throats for reasons religious, but Flore, white-clad and slim like the boy, and unafraid, stood smiling and whistling the little tune, and I spoke in the Arabic with the big voice. So they allowed us to pass and we made the acquaintance.

‘I have to thank you, M. le colonel.’

I made the protest. ‘But it was you who saved us. The Muslim—they believe a whistling woman to be possessed of a devil.’

She had the entrancing laughter of the grave-eyed. 'So I would have been if they had touched me.'

So I became the occasional visitor at Koubbah, was once—greatest of favours—allowed to look through the telescope, and was many times lectured by the little Gellion on the subject of star-charts and German iniquity.

Flore had but the few friends in Cairo—she had been of the too-busied with her stars—and I took her to the amusement and relaxation she would have denied herself. Then, for the little, she would forget moon and craters and her father's moods and that unanswered letter, and be merely the girl, with the laughter and the teasing and the enchantment.

She had the love for music and the dance and the pretty clothes, and to me, the romantic, there seemed but the one way in which these could ever unite and mingle with her passion for the stars. Once, in the half-jest, as we sat in the scraping of violins in a house above the Nile, I asked her when that would be.

Is there anything quite so tragic as the bitter laughter of youth? She turned away, that I might not see her eyes.

'Oh—when the Nile runs back through Bulaq Bridge!' she said.

VIII.

He was the Frenchman, Gellion. On the eve of publication of his discovery, which, if verified, would change the face and nature of the science selenography, he delayed that publication, remembering his one-time colleague, Freligrath of Bavaria. Forgetful of all that had passed, he despatched his calculations to Bavaria and invited verification of the phenomenon before it was made known to the European societies. The time for the second full-observation of the crater was now near.

But August Freligrath, who had gone through a war and two revolutions, who had once rescued his son with an Ebert-signed pardon the while that son, young and a rebel, stood facing a firing-squad, was the changed man also. He had been shocked and embittered by the Four Years and their aftermath, and there lingered with him memory of that article which Gellion had written in the far days of the nineteen-fifteen.

Yet he was honest. When the letter came from Cairo he was already the sick man dying as a result of privations suffered in political prisons. But he began the study close and intent of that

section of moon-surface where Gellion believed he had made the epochal discovery. On the night of the full-observation he sat the long hours at his telescope in spite the remonstrances of Friedrich.

And within Gellion's crater were only the black and steady shadows of no light. . . .

All next day August Freligrath sat at his desk, writing as in the fever. A week later, in the German astronomical journal, appeared under his signature the savagely-satirical account of the Gellion claim and his own disproof of it.

'The romantic French amateur, like the poor, is always with us. To suggest—as undoubtedly M. Gellion himself would do were he investigating the claims of a "Bosche"—that he is either liar or cheat is possibly to exaggerate. Rather is it a case of mistaken devotion. With so strong a gift for self-deception and undisciplined enthusiasm astrology, not astronomy, would seem to call M. Gellion.'

IX.

That journal came to the Gellions already dismayed and uncomprehending. They also had looked in a crater-well of blackness and on no smudge of gases from the volcano they believed existed.

To Flore's father, in spite his pugnacity, the article of Freligrath's was as death-blow. He shrank from it, very small and pitiful and suddenly aggressive not at all. I went to see him, ill in bed, and he lay with the closed eyes and moving lips. Within the week he was dead.

He was buried next day, for it was the summer, and of stifling heat. I came back to the little house in Palais de Koubbah, to one who did not weep but stood with clenched fists and stormy eyes.

'Oh God, those Bosches, those German swine! Father was right always, and I wrong. . . . Oh, Anton, my friend, I am so lost. . . .'

And she wept a little then, so proud and angry and desolate, and of the comfort I had none. Instead, my friend, I stood shamed in front of her—shamed that I was a man and with all men responsible for those twin deserts we make and call by the names of war and peace. . . .

I walked home from Palais de Koubbah that evening. Near Zeitoun the moon came up, and I stopped and stared at it and

lighted the pipe, with about me on the white road the shadows like the dancing ghosts. And there came on me with force of vivid revelation a fantastic thought—

The adventure-soul in man—the sum of its selfless achievements was as that volcano in the moon, the flaring light, the beacon in the wastes. And perhaps, like that volcano, it also was doomed to cease and pass, was already flickering to extinguishment before vanishing for ever in some final night of war and hate.

X.

Unexpectedly the new development. I went one night to Palais de Koubbah and found a cold, pale Flore with eyes of a stranger. She had the story for me. Friedrich Freligrath was in Cairo. He had called at the Gellion house and been refused the admittance. Then he had written a letter and enclosed with it a sheet of paper in another hand.

In hesitant French, set out in the ornate German script, the letter. 'I tried to see you, but the good Mathilde would not even know me. My dear, it is surely a mistake. I had no part in the disagreements of my father and M. Gellion.

'A month ago the Egyptian Government set a European competitive examination for a constructional engineer. In spite of my deplorable youthfulness, I have been selected to build those aqueducts I promised, and which you said you would love to see. May I come and look at your stars? . . .'

His father had been found dead at his study window three weeks before, and the sheet of paper enclosed held the beginnings of a letter found amongst Herr Freligrath's papers. It had probably been the last thing written by the Bavarian astronomer.

I spelt out the German. It was the note addressed to Thibaut Gellion. . . . They had both, perhaps, been too hasty. There was a mistake in the calculations; they had not allowed for . . .

They had not allowed for death, for there the letter ended.

XI.

Secretly I noted the address of the young Freligrath. He lived in Abbassieh, and next evening I went to see him and to him explain myself. He sat and stared at me, then laughed and passed his fingers through the up-standing, tow-coloured hair he had

retained from boyhood. He was the personable young man, planful and eager still, but with the surface-flippancy of his generation.

'So I am the son of a murderer, eh? And the little Flore a chauvinist? What a world! Have a drink?'

We spoke in the French for a while, for I have little German. Then we made the discovery. He was the enthusiast of the language English, as I am. Some far-uncle of his it was, he told me, who translated your Tennyson into the so-exquisite German.

Thereafter we spoke the English and were presently the interested acquaintances. I took him with me to see our Polychromata by night, and here, in the Khalig, in the seat where you now sit, introduced him to the little Simon and his so-surprising English beer. And then I heard details that filled out the troubled Gellion-Freligrath story.

'That letter you speak of—I never saw it. Bavaria was too busied with bayonets those days to pay much heed to its mails.'

I told him that in the next moon was another night of the full-observation, and that this time Flore Gellion was confident of proving the volcano's existence. He shook his head.

'Her father's calculations are correct enough—so far as they go. Either his premises were wrong, or he forgot some integral fact. I know. Mathematics is my hobby also, and I spent the voyage from Europe in checking my father's copy of the Gellion periodicity-chart. It is absolutely correct. She'll see no volcano.'

'But the uncompleted letter of Herr Freligrath?'

He shrugged. 'I do not know, and what he believed we will never know. In his later years he worked and thought like a man half-blinded in a shadow, my father—the mountain-shadow of the War.'

XII.

With but the short space of time for the task Flore, whatever startled ache of memory Friedrich's arrival in Cairo had awakened, flung herself into the checking of the Gellion calculations. To speak of my meeting with Freligrath I could find no opportunity.

But I learned that nowhere in the calculations of her father was the mistake to be found. They must have been built on the false assumptions basically. Yet that was impossible, else how could she have shared the telescopic illusion?

The matter of the uncompleted letter of August Freligrath

worried her, though she pretended to scorn it. What had they not allowed for, the German and her father?

Once she and Friedrich met, in the Sharia Kamil, coming face to face and knowing each other at the once. I heard of the chance meeting from Friedrich, for of it Flore made no mention.

'She looked me through, and then passed on.' He laughed; laughter was his cloak. But presently he was angry. 'Yet she is Flore Gellion and I Friedrich Freligrath spite our fathers and all the years of blood and hate. What have we to do with those weary animosities? I tell you there was the half-moment, before she cut me, when I could have taken her and kissed her, and she kissed me. I saw it in her eyes. . . . And then the Shadow.'

He forgot his laughter-cloak, this pleasant young man, and I saw the Spartacist of Bavaria. 'Curse their mean and dirty little nationalisms, their petty spites and their petty patriotisms! Curse the infernal moon and all its volcanoes! What have we to do with their lunatic astronomical past, dead Gellion and dead Freligrath?'

'Some day, being dead, the future may demand that of *your* past,' I said. But he paid no heed. Instead, stood staring at the sky in the kind of desperation.

Overhead, like a portent, hung the sickle moon.

XIII.

From moon-rise on the calculated night Flore Gellion sat the long hours in the observatory, looking up under her eye-shades through the light-flooded glass of the giant lens. She sat in a little saddle below the telescope, and in the observatory was the dead silence but for the ticking of the clockwork which synchronised the movements of the telescope with the minute motion of the lunar disc. I sat and looked at her, or wandered to the uncurtained portion of the glass roof and stared up, foolishly, at the full moon. Sometimes Flore brought the great camera into play and I helped with the changing of slides. At moon-set I went down and brought up the coffee Mathilde had made. Flore had come from the telescope. She sat at a little table, her hands covering her eyes.

'Only tired, Anton.' There was the break in her voice. 'And my eyes.'

'And the volcano?'

'Look and see. Quick, for the disc is beginning to fade.'

Our Cairene moon—she sails the sky the mystery and wonder to the naked eye. No less the mystery of her strange lands which start to being under the telescope. In the little was the blur gone from my eyes and that unearthly landscape lay below me, etched in ink, under its pitiless day.

Upstanding full in the centre of the lens, its outer sides clothed in the dazzle of sunshine, I looked for the first time upon the fateful Gellion crater.

XIV.

Here, where I had promised to meet him, Friedrich was awaiting me the following night, and I made no greetings but answered the question in his eyes.

‘There is no volcano. Flore herself could see no trace of activity, and the photographs show none.’

There came on his face the pity and something of the dismay. But I think it was no selfish dismay. ‘I had hoped, after all. . . . I spent the better part of last night, rechecking the chart and trying to find some omission. If only I were an astronomer! . . . Did you look?’

‘I looked. Tundra and rock and the blazing daylight and the mountain-shadows. Shadows like the spattered drops of night. It is a world of shadow.’

There was the silence, and then suddenly his quick breathing. I looked up and found him staring at me. ‘My God, of course it is!’

‘It is?—’

But he was on his feet. ‘The seasonal orbit-roll! Why didn’t they think—but they were blinded in shadows themselves! . . . Or did my father guess it before he died? Eh? *The shadow, man, the mountain-shadow!*’

And he was gone.

XV.

I spent the next three days with a tourist-party down in Helwan-les-Bains, and came back to Cairo in the evening and the tiredness. It was late and I was about to make the undress, when I was told of the messenger newly come for me.

I went down and found it the good Mathilde, grumbling and indignant.

‘You are to come with me, mon colonel. So mademoiselle will have it.’

I made the reflection that youth knows not of tiredness. 'She is ill?'

The old Frenchwoman was of the very indignant. 'Sick of the mind, I think,' and sat opposite me in the taxi which had brought her, saying nothing more.

She showed me up into that moon-showered observatory, with its clocks and instruments, and I knew the telescope in action by the ceaseless tick. But the saddle-seat was unoccupied. There were no lights, nothing but the play of shadows, yet in those shadows the murmur of voices that puzzled me.

Then the electric light came on, and Flore was in front of me, and from the seat behind her rose someone else. She stood as if to conceal this other from my gaze, but I took her shoulders and put her aside, and looked.

It was Friedrich Freligrath.

And then, while I stared from the one to the other, they were the embarrassed children till Flore's arm was in mine. She pulled me to the telescope seat and sat me in it.

'Look, colonel.'

It was the same lunar landscape, the same crater into which I had looked. But in the crater-mouth, in place of the inked shadow, was a fainter blackness, and presently, as I looked, I caught my breath at that wonderful sight and knew something of the awe and fear.

For the shadow moved and changed, and suddenly lightened and lightened till it was almost a glow, there, in the wild lands a quarter of a million miles away. I swung round to look at those two behind me, and then back again to peer across the gulfs at that amazing flicker of the gas-clouds.

And then Friedrich's hand was on my shoulder, and he was explaining.

'It was the shadow of the crater-walls M. Gellion did not take into account. He found it impossible to measure the depths of those walls, and then must have forgotten them as a factor—the gradual encroaching of their shadow, in a circular tilt, upon the crater itself. But for that omission the chart of periodicity is correct. The night you and Flore watched, that volcano was moving there, but it lay in the shadow of its own crater-walls. With the passing of the lunar year the acceleration of the shadow is swifter than the tilt of the moon-floor. . . . Oh, I'm the astronomer, colonel! I've been absorbing lunar lore through the pores of my skin during the last seventy hours!'

'And how——?' I asked, and then stopped, for I knew.

'Friedrich had inspiration when he heard you talk of the shadows. He went home, estimated a depth of crater-wall, allowed for the shadow, and amended my father's calculations. . . . Oh, the pity of it that they should never know! Last time Herr Freligrath and my father held their observations—if they had delayed two days they would have seen the volcano. This time it was not observable until four days after the originally-calculated date.' She was silent, then laughed the little, but with tears in her eyes and her hands outstretched to the German enemy, making the question to which she should have known the answer. 'My dear, you've surpassed us all! How did you do it—you whom astronomy always so bored?'

XVI.

I walked home again that night, for it was too late to find the vehicle and my tiredness was gone. Flore and Friedrich came part of the way with me, talking of the Gellion-Freligrath discovery which they were to publish. At parting they laughed and kissed me, being both impulsive children of the Frankish blood, and whether they ever went home that night to further scandalise the good Mathilde or else walked the roads singing and planning the storming of the stars, I do not know. But I remember that as I heard their glad young voices crying *au revoir* down the white moonlight, there came to me the whimsical memory. Surely the Nile was running back through Bulaq Bridge this night!

Then I forgot those lovers re-discovered; they faded from my mind, cyphers and symbols in a story yet untold, an adventure uncompleted. For I found myself on that stretch of Zeitoun road where, but the short month before, I had stood in the silence under the moon, alone with my vision of human futility.

And then I knew that I had dreamed. While the truth remains a passion even in the darkened and wounded mind of a Gellion or Freligrath, while passion itself flowers forth in a Friedrich a bloom that is other than desire, there is no night that may ever blind the flame that lights the wastes.

There are only the shadows that pass.

TO PHILOSOPHISE IS TO KNOW HOW TO DIE.

BY F. McEACHRAN.

'THE long habit of living indisposeth man for dying,' said Sir Thomas Brown in sorrow, and turning his face toward eternity left his life with little regret. But long before him the theme of dying was a frequent one, and many men like him, had dwelt on its strange and noble attraction. For it seems that even as a man meets and overcomes this problem and conflict of death, so is he in his inmost being; and in this final judgment the noble and the best, the meanest and the worst, alike at the end must take part. To some it is a passage from a worse to a better state, to some from a better to a worse, while others have found it a passage more subtle than these, whose worth is hard to the defining. Some have held it to be a passage to nothing at all, to utter and irrevocable extinction, and have not flinched at the thought. Some smile serenely in the face of death, some mock at it; some avert their gaze, and some gloat over it, but few at all, if time be granted them, have failed to be moved at its approach. And if, as Cicero was wont to say, to philosophise is to know how to die, a rich treasure is preserved in the last words of men, and we shall not lose in the seeking.

Of those who found it a passage from bad to good and who held it to be a release, there are many divisions, from those who curse the life they have lived and turn with revulsion away, to those who find it bad in the light of eternity but not too bad to have been endured. Yet men are not consistent in this; they are made of varied stuff, streaked with curious hopes and fears, and often they seem to say both yea and nay to the life which is ebbing from them. But in some there is no doubt at all; of these Lord Hamlet is one, who finds death, more than most, a glorious release. On the edge of the abyss he turns to his friend Horatio and pleading, begs him to bear it a little while longer, as an evil thing, and a cruel. 'Absent thee from felicity awhile, and in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain, to tell my story,' a phrase indeed worthy to make death proud. Macbeth, too, has found little joy in his petty path from

day to day, and looking back at the end awaits eagerly the snuffing of the candle the flicker of which had been so foul. And behind him in darker places there rings out a clearer cry, from the innocent who suffer by their folly, and know not how at all. 'Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all?' These it seems have had enough, and desire to remain on the rack no longer. They depart, but not in peace, from the life so strangely given, with a curse and an imprecation, to deepen their last farewell. They answer no to the question, and looking neither left nor right, seek neither heaven nor hell, but only gentle oblivion and a long peace at the end. This exit from life was a common one in Shakespeare, but it does not exhaust the deaths which are called release. There is another and greater kind, of those who say yes to life but who, departing, find it bad enough to leave. To them life has a meaning which they hope shall be clear in the end. They also are crucified, stoned or tortured, but still they wait, seeking, in place of the long habit, a new one they yet shall assume. Of these a noble example is Socrates, whose death is still memorable and whose ugly, but smiling, face still cheers the darkness of closing years. 'I go to death,' said he calmly, 'and you to life, but which of us goes to the better place God alone doth know.'

His was a joy at departing, if a chastened joy, and a sort of wakening from a troubled dream. We are told that some were so enraptured by his description of the glory to be in the circling of heaven that they must needs depart also, to behold it at his side, and partake of his joyful awakening. A different dream, it is true, from that later one of Shakespeare, but not altogether alien to the fitful fever which Duncan once threw off. 'We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little lives are rounded with a sleep.' To which some might answer bitterly, a nightmare, not a dream, and crying, ask to wake; while yet another, apt to mock, replies, 'You cannot, 'tis a dream of a dream.' So it was in that immortal play of Calderón,¹ whose hero dreamt twice, and twice awakening, knew not at the end which was truth (*Toda la vida es sueño, y los sueños sueño son.*—'All life is a dream, and the dreams themselves are a dream.') It may be Socrates found it so when he shuffled off this mortal coil, and began his long passage from world to world. But it suffices that his death was release, for after him came Another whose release was mightier still.

¹ *la Vida es sueño.*

The Stoics who followed Zeno are apostles of another path, of the passage from the good to the good. From cycle to cycle, from fire to fire was the voyage of living to them, and death but an episode between. 'What matters it,' said Epictetus grimly, 'by what road thou goest down to Hades? They are all the same,' and remembering Socrates he adds more serenely, 'I will depart whither no man shall hinder me, to the dwelling which stands open to all. If He give the signal for retreat as He did to Socrates, we must obey Him as our commander.' Grim but serene was Epictetus, and death his constant theme. When the ship of life sinks, and sink in the end it must (since all things flow to this), then the problem is for the Captain and not for Epictetus. 'Sink then,' says Epictetus. He will provide for the salvaging. On the same ship, no doubt, was Marcus Aurelius in the twilight voyage of Rome, and during his long vigil at the wheel he had ample time to reflect. At the end of his journey this was the entry in his log-book: 'Thou hast embarked, thou hast made thy voyage, thou hast arrived—Get Out!' And to those who are reluctant to leave because they would linger still, this is his last admonition, 'Depart thou then satisfied, for he also who releases thee is satisfied.' These are noble words and not without their echo through the ages. Long after they were caught up by another, in obscurer and less spacious times. We recall Montaigne in his corner of France, alone in his unfortified chateau. Around him is the fury of man, rapine, and deep distrust, he unperturbed and kindly alike to friend and foe. These are his words on death: '*Le même passage que vous fites de la mort à la vie, sans passion et sans frayeur, refaites-le de la vie à la mort. Votre mort est une pièce de la vie du monde. Allez-vous-en satisfait.*' Such was the Stoic temper, proud perhaps and unbending, but its human aim was great. It is a marvellous thing, as Seneca said, to combine with the fragility of man the serenity of the gods, and he not least of the Stoics knew how hard a thing this was.

These and such as they, passed serenely from the good to the good; for death is a marvellous release, and the fire which both ends and begins a most glorious conflagration. At the prospect of 'eternal return' they did not quail, nor tremble lest the gods send them back to their posts. But what shall we say of the Epicureans who also were serene, but of a harder and less human sort? They passed, not from good to good, but from good to nothing, to the final extinction of soul in the blind atoms of Democritus. '*Omnes eodem cogimur*' rings dully in our ears if pleasure is the end of life

and not virtue, and dully, too, in the ears of the gods who are in peace. Death is a poor thing in a chaos of atoms, with no glorious Heracleitan fire, and as for that banquet of Lucretius, its meats are too soon cold. 'From the feast of life,' said Lucretius, 'the guest should depart, as one who has eaten his full.' A sorry banquet, we may reply, if virtue has given no appetite for the feast, and bootless indeed to add, as Metrodorus would have us add, a prayer of thanksgiving to the gods. They are far away, we are told, in the spaces between the worlds, drinking nectar all their days: they do not hear, and our prayer is a mockery of words. Why pray then? Be silent and depart! Dante, after many years, remembers those who died in this manner and prepared a place for them in Inferno. 'Death,' said Epicurus, 'is the end. On jette de la terre sur la tête, et en voilà pour jamais.' So it is in Inferno, and yet not quite so. The tomb they sought is theirs and the burial also, but nameless in the tomb they burn for ever. They still have their dignity and their high-born mien, but the extinction they desired is denied them.

It is hard to follow easily the multi-path of death, and we turn to another route. Some there were who died with a jest on their lips, and sought neither heat nor cold. Montaigne wished that death should find him in his garden, planting his cabbages, and nonchalant both of cabbages and death. There is nobility in this and modernity, and to such a prayer we can but say Amen. An English king died with this urbanity, excusing himself with a jest for the unconscionable time he took to do it, and hearing him speaking thus, we cannot but wish him well. Antiquity was rich in this candour in the face of sinking mortality. Augustus in his bed died more humanly than he lived. 'Livia, farewell, remember our marriage.' Galba, the emperor of a day, to the men who made and then unmade him, 'Strike, if thus the Roman people may profit.' Vespasian, grimly aware of his apotheosis, and dying sitting on the stool, observed with pleasantness, 'I suppose I am becoming a god.' But sweeter than all was the tender verse of Hadrian to his soul, soon to wander lonely in the dark, to joke and laugh no more.

Animula, vagula, blandula
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quae nunc abibis in loca
Rigida, nudula, pallida,
Nec, ut soles, dabis iocos.

This is a loving ending to the comedy of life whose last act was

so often bloody, and Rome, we recall, was rife in bloody shows, and her words more often full of bitterness. Jugurtha in the ice-cold dungeon, as the water rises, jests bitingly. 'Marius, how cold your bath.' Julian the apostate, vanquished at last by Christ, knows that he has failed and with his 'Vicisti Galilaeæ' subscribes dying to his own defeat. Yet Rome was not so cynical as more modern times, if we believe the legend of Rabelais, when his last joke was cracked and Pantagruelian cheer no more. 'Tirez le rideau, la farce est jouée.' Scarron, in the sleep of death, when the time to be funny has passed, remembers his sleepless life. 'Car voici la première fois que le pauvre Scarron sommeille.' Bitter, too, is Voltaire to those who are over anxious and desire to bring him to God. 'Away with this mockery, can a man not die in peace?' There is a consistency in this which compels our admiration. He would 'Ecrasez l'Infâme' even unto the end.

Some have lived too little, like Virgil in Dante's Inferno, 'here stand I with the little innocent ones,' and some, like King Croesus, too long, 'Oh Solon, Solon,' moaned he when the pyre was fashioned by Cyrus, remembering the words of wisdom and the transient fame of men. Others, too, may die of the *tedium vitæ* as Seneca so soothingly reminds us, 'Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris.—Remember how often you have done the same things.' But these are sorry maxims, pertaining only to the length of life, which, when all is said, is finished wherever it ends. It is the feeling, not the time, which really matters. The worst feeling surely, and the worst death, is that of the suicides; they who of their own free will, desert the post. Ignoble this, and hopeless. Ignoble, because they cannot endure, and hopeless, because unsucceeding. A man may destroy his life that is, but not the life that has been. His past lives on and is already beyond his reach. Dead, he is still alive and his works live after him. Yet in the days when suicide meant release from shame it was not without its glory and Rome thought highly of deaths such as these. We must admire Petronius and his calm retreat when we recall the monster he tricked, and the loving persuasion of Arria is a glory of womankind. To her husband who feared to die she showed the way: 'Paete, non dolet!—Paetus, it does not hurt!' There rises with her the vision of another who also knew when the end must come. 'Finish, good lady, for the bright day is done, and we are for the night.' This by a woman to a woman, before the asp bit. And as for Cato of Utica, whose name is written gloriously in Virgil (his lantern jura Catonem), he finds fame in all regions, and in the

teeth of destiny creeps into the Purgatory of the Christian. But these are pagan glories rising hardly beyond the flesh. Less noble for the followers of Christ, for whom the soul was the only end and who could walk unsullied, in the triumph of a Cæsar of Rome. To them no excuse permits self-slaughter and rejection of the life God may need. The greater number who so sinned are dishonoured, and their names forgotten. They lie at cross-roads with a stake through their hearts, and their sayings are not recorded.

After all it is the Christian who dies most humanly. 'It is finished,' said Bede, when his work was over, and went joyfully where no more work is done. His peace may be envied, for not all pass so easily away. 'Sancta Simplicitas,' said Huss mildly, to the woman who piled the fagot; and turned his face to the stake. There is a tale of another Christian who was even milder than these—Andry Shebanov the groom. His master Prince Shuisky having offended the Czar Ivan the Terrible in the days of Holy Russia, fled to Poland, and there hurled defiance at his lord. He sent him from Poland a message of contumely, and seeking a messenger to deliver it Andry Shebanov alone among his followers dared to go. Andry came to Moscow and presented the message to the Czar in the midst of his courtiers. Ivan, enflamed with fury at the insults it contained, turned on Shebanov and with the iron pointed staff in his hand he pierced his foot. This was his only answer. Shebanov was then put to the torture, to make him betray the names of his master's friends. He died in agony, without betraying a single name, but constantly praying—for whom? for the Czar Ivan, for his master, and for Holy Russia. These are Christian deaths, without fear like those of the Stoics, but without pride also and more human. Even the rogue and murderer François Villon was sublime in his visions of death, as the *Ballade des Pendus* bears witness.¹ 'Human brothers who after us do live.'

The modern way is less heroic than these, being rather to ignore death and to remember the joy of life: to say with Spinoza (reversing the words of Paul), that the true premeditation of death is the contemplation of life, or with Faust to regard it as a great adventure and the piling of life on life. 'Death opens unknown doors, it is most grand to die;' it is an onslaught on infinity, and a source of infinite joy. But the old still stands and is not gainsayed

¹ 'Frères humains qui après nous vivez
N'ayez les cœurs contre nous endurcis.'

by the new. There remain three noble farewells, than which the world will hardly find a greater. The first by that successor of Socrates who found great release in death. 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' Less than this and in return for it, if the strength be there, is the Christian's answer, 'Ruat caelum—Fiat Voluntas Tua.' Lastly and most human, sweetest of all, as Bacon has it, is the 'Nunc Dimittis,' for to this all men may rise.

COME NO MORE.

Come no more.

I have put out the light
And lie at peace.
My house is now in darkness;
I have set no lamp
In the niche that you remember.

Come no more.

For my heart has ceased its crying,
And the Spring
Is but a senseless pageantry of green.

Come no more.

Too late the sound of weeping reaches me.
My ears have grown so deaf,
My eyes so blind—
I have put out the light
And lie at peace.

OLIVE CLARE PRIMROSE.

BACKWASH.

BY F. H. DORSET.

THE world of Old Carbourne was full of sea-mist. It had crept inland in stilly wreaths at mid-morning, and no breeze had as yet arisen to scatter it; it bid fair to become a fog, and between the shore and Stephen Hardyke's tobacco-shop it hung a curtain from beyond which the inrush and backwash of waves on a shingly beach sounded heavily through a solemn silence. Stephen Hardyke, seated behind his deserted counter making up next week's orders for stock, heard it with the accumulated reluctance of years.

Hardyke was an inlander; and in spite of the strain of Dutch seafaring blood in his ancestry and in face of the fact that he had spent thirty years of his life trading tobacco and cigarettes, newspapers, novelettes, stationery and sweets, in Old Carbourne, with the Channel almost a stone's throw from his door, he had never become reconciled to the sea. He did not like it, either to live by or to sail upon. For thirty years it had afflicted his liver and his temperament, but he continued to endure it. So much will a man do for love, and Stephen Hardyke loved his wife. And over the shop-front, perennially fresh, was written the history of his married life in the gold lettering which proclaimed 'S. Hardyke, Tobacconist and Newsagent, late Framlin.' Mrs. Hardyke had been Miss Framlin, bred up by a widower father almost in a tobacco-jar, inheritor of a business which dated back into the smuggling era of a century ago when her father's father had set up shop and smiled at baffled servants of the revenue. House, shop, name, these were historical in Old Carbourne. Sally Framlin was wise about tobaccos in her cradle and a capable business-woman in her teens, so when Stephen, distant relative of the family, came as a young man to stay with her father and aunt to recuperate after serious illness, and, falling in love, proposed, he had to marry both Sally and shop or neither. The 'S. Hardyke' over the door indicated Sarah, not Stephen, though few people were aware of the fact. Stephen had surrendered agriculture, liver, and liberty to the all-powerful claims of Aphrodite's son.

It hadn't been a bad bargain, on the whole. Sally had kept her looks and her sprackness and her affection for her husband unimpaired down to the present time. Pretty to begin with, she had mellowed prettily, charmingly pink and white beneath sea-breezes which turned her husband yellow. To-day, at fifty odd, her thick greying hair waved enticingly over either temple, her round neat figure invited Stephen's arm. A very happy marriage it had been, except for the sea. That had always been a disturbing element in their lives. It had troubled Stephen's health and drawn their son away from them, leaving only the daughter who at this moment was busy stocktaking in the stationery and library department which opened off the front shop.

Sarah junior was Sarah. 'Sally' was reserved for her mother, so much the younger and more frivolous of the two—on the surface. Sarah took life seriously. She was plain, slightly lame owing to a fall on the rocks as a child, and she discerned a joke with difficulty; but she inherited the Framlin capacity for attention to detail and hard work. Now, at almost twenty-nine, she understood all the ins and outs of the business, kept the books, and saw to it that the Subscription Library was reasonably up to date. New Carbourne, straggling away along its esplanade, patronised showier tobacconists and a Library embedded behind the plate-glass glories of a multiple chemist, but Old Carbourne remained chiefly faithful to the Hardyke establishment for its cigarettes and its literature and its daily paper, a fact which it must be admitted was very largely due to the enterprise of Sarah. Mrs. Hardyke, proud of her offspring in this respect if sorely disappointed in others, had gradually retreated from much active work in the shop and had become almost purely domestic in her daily routine—although she kept a sharp eye on affairs none the less. Since Bob had run off to sea in his teens and only wrote occasional letters at long intervals from varying ports it had become an understood thing in Old Carbourne that the business would ultimately pass to Sarah. Secretly both parents hoped that such an endowment would bring a decent husband to a girl who certainly needed some addition to her natural attractions. A man did not necessarily make a bad husband because his motives were slightly pecuniary, and Sarah could be trusted never to take a drone. Bob had always disliked the notion of shop-keeping. He had always wanted sea and ships, and even as infants he and Sarah never got on well together. She was eighteen months his senior,

but Bob, masterful even in petticoats, had early exacted from his sister an unwilling obedience to his demands. At fifteen he had gone off suddenly into the unknown, and Sarah had not been able to regret him, in spite of her mother's reddened eyes and her father's down-turned lips. They had not seen him since. He had departed a slow-growing, stocky boy with belligerent blue eyes and a husky voice. Sarah, whenever she thought about him at all, imagined him now as a short thick man like her father, young yet but somehow never very young, and, unlike his father, sunburnt red rather than brown and coarse in speech and thought. That was what he had promised to become nearly twelve years ago.

She was not thinking about him now, however, as she inspected her remaining stock of lead-pencils and picture-postcards. Sarah's thoughts, unbeknown to her father, were apt to follow paths strangely frivolous now and again. She was musing at this moment about Lily Dulwich and her young man.

Among the tradespeople of Old Carbourne the Hardykes held a secure and friendly place. Mrs. Hardyke in particular had many friends, folk who had been young with her and now had young ones of their own, among whom it might have been supposed that Sally's daughter would have plenty of lively companions with whom out of working hours to share the summer and winter amusements of the newer town. But Sarah was heavy in hand, plain, lame, dogmatic, and secretly so shy that only by an effort of almost violent self-assertion could she contrive to mix socially with her fellow-mortals. She had not, therefore, many friends, and among them the fair and graceful Lily loomed large. Entrenched behind her duties of the shop Sarah could be business-like and unembarrassed; placed in the midst of a social gathering she was either devastating or silent. So even to Lily, who had penetrated her reserves and made her confidante of various romances, she had revealed very little of her inner personality, and nothing at all of such thoughts as now occupied her. Mechanically she filled the tiers of a revolving picture-postcard stand and voiced inwardly the refrain of her daily discontent.

'Lily gets more young men than she knows what to do with. It's waste.'

The young man of the moment, to whom Lily happened to be actually engaged and whom it was really quite possible that

she might marry, happened to be Wilson Brent, only son and heir of the best shoe-shop in Old Carbourne. That was one reason why the girl possessed such a variety of dancing shoes. Wilson was undeniably a good looker, and his face had a way of hanging about in dark corners of Sarah's memory which tried her a little, to-day especially. Young men usually treated Sarah with a politeness which set her firmly outside the pale of the happy slangy camaraderie due to the girl of to-day. Wilson, however, had always been consolingly familiar. He had even, now and then, appeared to like talking with her. Until Lily captured him he had sometimes draped himself over the counter and spent quite a while gossiping over the purchase of cigarettes and football editions, and on such occasions Mr. Hardyke had always either vanished or gone off to attend to the needs of another customer. But those days were over. Sarah admitted to herself that she had never really fallen in love with Wilson, but all the same that he was the nearest thing to a Boy that she had ever possessed or seemed likely to possess. Uncertain in her own mind about the desirability of marriage she still did most ardently wish that she could draw about her an attentive swain or two by the strength of her personal attractiveness; that she could dance nimbly with mind and body; that she could take life a little less seriously. But she couldn't. Self-consciousness and physical disability for ever hung about her, a clog and often-times a despair. In one thing only she excelled, her business capacity; and upon this she fell back as a protective absorption. She loved the shop and the red-backed ledgers. To-day, as usual, she derived comfort from the thought that at any rate, whatever life deprived her of, the business would one day be hers.

The sea-mist was clean, altogether different from the murky fogs of an inland town, although its white opacity dimmed the daylight and involved the burning of electricity in both front and back departments of the shop. It was wet, too; penetrative and tiresome. Stephen Hardyke told himself not for the first time that the shop was much too near the sea-front to be good for the stock it contained. Windows and door were firmly closed and radiators warmed the place pleasantly, but there was a film none the less upon the mirror whose decorated face advertised 'Navy Cut.' Custom was a bit slow to-day, as was natural, but the few people who passed in and out were enough to admit

wreaths of insinuating wet mist and loud snatches of the sea's monotonous strife with the shingle. Influx, backwash; a futile attempt to get 'forrader' ending in the mere grinding of stones to pebbles and pebbles to sand in century-long sequence. Stephen Hardyke never expressed himself very clearly to himself, but much listening to this sound had bred in him a dim recognition of its kinship to the history of his inner life, which was one reason why it fed some of his moments with melancholy. He had never got much 'forrader' in achievement. His daughter excelled him in shop-keeperly ability, his wife domestically; he loved them both yet knew that he had never penetrated far into the coastline of their minds. As for his son, infant of many hopes, even fatherly affection had been forced to admit that he had been a selfish, unattractive youth whose departure upon a career of his own had not been an unmixed sorrow to his family. Stephen felt that he had largely failed as a father to his son, but that Bob on his side had certainly failed as a son to his father. Still, the lad seemed to have proved himself better than had been at first anticipated. He wrote regularly about once a quarter from wherever he happened to be and he seemed to be getting along all right. At any rate, if he had never sent home anything in the way of gifts to anybody, he had never asked for anything either. He had cost his people nothing since he left. Framlin independence was strong in the veins of both of Sally's children.

Stephen closed his Order Book and looked up. The shop door had swung open, admitting a customer and a particularly large dose of fog. In the stationery department Sarah also looked up from her sorting. The entrant was large enough in physique and voice to demand attention even in a crowd; much more so in the pool-like stillness of the mist-muffled shop.

He was a tall broad-shouldered, heavy-built man, whom Stephen judged to be verging on the thirties, tanned a deep red-brown which looked darker for the marked fairness of his sun-bleached hair and short close-trimmed beard. His upper lip was shaven, giving his face an oddly old-fashioned nonconformity with his years, and the mouth thus half-revealed was hard, in keeping with the quality of his blue, unmistakably seaman's eyes. He wore ordinary clothing, tight-stretched over his powerful frame, but he was certainly, thought Mr. Hardyke, an officer from one of the smaller trading-vessels which lay in Carbourne Harbour. He bore about him an air of authority not possessed

by the mere A.B. Stephen served many such and was quick to recognise the type.

'Half-pound tin Extra Honeybright,' said the new-comer laconically, laying down a pound note on the counter.

Stephen regarded his customer with mild surprise. Sailors of this man's class were few indeed who could afford to purchase Extra Honeybright at eighteen pence an ounce, or who had the taste for it either; let alone buying it in eight-ounce tins. In fact Stephen only stocked Extra Honeybright at all because of General Wilford and one or two other of his oldest and most affluent clients. There was no demand for it in Old Carbourne.

'I see you're a bit of a connoisseur in 'baccy,' he ventured, slowly counting out change while the customer pocketed the tin.

'Ought to be,' replied the man, 'was in the trade once.' He scooped up his change with a large hand, and turned away towards the stationery department, whence Sarah was watching him with oddly interested gaze. He stepped down into the low long room where the Subscription Library arrayed itself inviting inspection. 'Got any postcards of Old Carbourne, Miss?' he asked.

'Yes,' said the girl, gently revolving the show-stand. 'Plenty. I've just been putting out a new supply, and they are very good. There's the Castle . . . and the Old Harbour and quay . . . and the Lighthouse. . . . Fishing Boats by Moonlight . . .'

'Any coloured ones?'

'Oh yes! And you can have an envelope of six assorted views for tenpence, or we have novelties. This penholder for instance. If you hold it up to the light you'll see there's a magnifying glass in the handle with a view . . .'

'Novelty!' snorted the seaman, smiling a sudden engaging smile. 'I've seen that kind of penholder along with painted shells and suchlike in every British port I've been into a'most since I went to sea!'

Sarah permitted her rather thick lips to smile responsively.

'Oh, well!' she ventured. . . .

The sailor turned the cards about thoughtfully.

'Business is pretty slack, I suppose, at this time of year,' he remarked.

'Not so bad. We don't depend on the visitor trade so much down here as in the New Town. We have our regular customers.'

'I suppose so. It's some years since I was last in Carbourne. The place has grown. I want a birthday card now, please, and

I'll take these,' indicating a small pile of picture post-cards which he had laid aside.

'Thank you. There are the birthday cards. I'm afraid we haven't much choice at present. Did you want it for a child or a grown-up?'

'For my sister, round about thirty and a spinster still. It'd better be a comic, I think.'

Very gravely Sarah produced an assortment of 'comics' and laid them before him. He poked at them with a thick, contemptuous finger.

'Jokes!' he said. 'Ain't they funny! Same old perennials croppin' up with a fresh picter! You're a bit select, though, aren't you? Nothing very spicy here!'

She looked at him primly.

'We don't sell that kind of thing,' she assured him. He laughed, a large full-chested sound which made Stephen Hardyke in the outer shop jump.

'No,' he agreed, having laughed, 'your trade's high class, I can see. Well, in any case I shouldn't send anything that wasn't refined to my sister. This'll do.'

Sarah obediently added to his collection the forget-me-not encircled representation of an afflicted cross-Channel passenger, bearing the inscription 'Many Happy Returns.' It seemed to her a bit pointless, but to every man his own sense of humour. She slipped the cards into a large manilla envelope, and knew that the sailor was watching her inoffensively but closely. She received a surprising impression that he found her attractive, and she wondered if he would come into the shop again before he left Carbourne.

The sailor accepted the filled envelope with a word of polite thanks, and, retracing his steps, halted by Stephen's counter to light his pipe and enter into the desultory conversation of a man at a loose end. He was, it transpired, Captain Roberts, Skipper and part owner of the *Gwynneth Lloyd* from Tenby, now lying in Carbourne Harbour waiting to proceed to Southampton for repairs after a fog-enfolded collision with the *Bridget Magrath* of Kinsale. The two ladies, apparently, had damaged each other extensively, and the Irishwoman was trying to put all the blame on the Welshwoman. Inquiry and repairs were likely to cause long delay, and Captain Roberts professed himself out of love with his calling. He had recently become a widower, inheriting a respectable little

fortune from his wife, after whom his ship was named. He now had the chance of selling out his share in the *Gwynneth* and was minded to do so and to buy a holding in some business—preferably a tobacconist and newsagency—ashore. He'd known something of that trade as a boy. An uncle of his in Southampton had run such a shop, but he himself did not fancy settling in that city. He had served his apprenticeship to the sea under a Nova Scotian, had worked his way up by a run of luck and hard work, four years ago had married the daughter of the original owner of the *Gwynneth Lloyd* at Tenby, and now had lost her and was childless, though still a young man. The sea was a precarious trade nowadays, especially for the smaller owners. His brother-in-law wished to buy him out, and this last mishap had decided him. As soon as the present business was settled he was going to sell out and retire. Carbourne had taken his fancy, but he did not suppose that there was much of an opening for another man here. Still, it was less than an hour by rail from Southampton, and that suited his wishes. What did Mr. Hardyke, as an old-established business man of Carbourne, think about it?

Sarah had finished her stocktaking long before the subsequent discussion between the two men ended, and she was called by her father into the conclave. Sally also presently appeared, and then Captain Roberts found himself at the Hardyke tea-table in the pleasant ancient front room over the shop, eating Sally's home-made cake and talking to her like one of the family. And in Sarah's dusky-sallow cheeks burnt a dull unwonted pink.

That night the two elder Hardykes lay awake in the curtained darkness of their bedroom and discussed Possibilities.

Said Sally, briskly combining sentiment with business-instinct, 'Steve, if that Captain Roberts is all he appears to be, and that's easy enough to find out, for he seems to be well known at Tenby, he's the man for Sarah and the shop when you and me give up. You can see he's took to her and she to him. There's more in Sarah than most young men have eyes to see, but he's a widower. He'll have learnt a bit of discernment, no doubt.'

'Yes,' said Stephen, staring doubtfully at the dark ceiling.

'I'll write to Megan Jones,' continued Mrs. Hardyke, twitching the pink-ribboned cap which she wore over her 'wavers' nightly into an angle which prevented one of its rosettes from covering a slightly deaf ear; 'you know who I mean. That Welsh cousin

of the Brents, who stayed here with them last summer and was so friendly. Her and me seemed to take to each other instinctive, and she lives near Tenby. She'll know people there who can find out about Captain Roberts.'

'Yes,' responded Stephen.

Mrs. Hardyke ruminated in silence for a few minutes, then resumed, what time her small plump left hand with its tight wedding-ring found Stephen's stubby right hand and held it confidently . . . a trick of Sally's when she particularly wished to get her own way.

'You know, Steve,' she said, insinuatingly, 'you've never really had your heart in the business. You never would even come in as partner, though you did ought to have done so when Dad died and left it to me. You would have it that Sarah'd make a better one failing Bob, because one day you wanted to give up and take to market gardening. Well, Bob *has* failed us, and I've a kind of fancy to retire altogether myself, along of you. I'll tell you a secret, Steve, and perhaps then you won't think I'm kidding you when I say that after thirty years of putting up with you I . . . do . . . love you Steve . . .'

'Lord, woman! . . .'

'You see, I found some years back that I was getting too took up with the business, too interested in it. It was getting hold of me, like a kind of . . . what's the word, Steve? Word they use a lot nowadays in novels—oh, *obsession*. I was a bit afraid it'd spoil things for you, having a wife as was married to her shop. That's why I took to the house again, and to going out, and put Sarah into my place alongside of you in the business. And now I'd like to get clear altogether, with you. We could afford it if Sarah married a decent fellow who'd buy a partnership with her. They could have this house and we'd shift, get a bungalow, perhaps, inland a bit, and grow tomatoes and grapes.'

Stephen was silent for a second, swallowing the magnitude of her sacrifice. Sally retiring! Sally yielding to the young, and to him! Sally growing tomatoes and away from the sea! His Sally still, after thirty years! Perhaps her motives were just a little mixed. Sarah unmarried was something of a problem, but still—dear Sally!

'You don't mean it!' he said, drawing her closer to him.

'I *do* mean it!'

'Sally, old girl, you're *it*, and no mistake, but don't go too fast with looking ahead.'

'I'm not. But one's got to do one's best for the girl. And I like the looks of Captain Roberts. There's something about him reminds me of Bob—only Bob'd be more like you, a shorter man grown.'

'Yes,' said Stephen, with slight grimness, 'Bob'd be more limited like, in all directions. But there's one thing about this Roberts as does remind me strong of him. He's pleasant enough, but he has a mighty hard-looking eye. I'd want to know a bit about the way he behaved to his first wife before I trusted our Sarah to him.'

'Why, of course!' agreed Sally. 'But we'll find all that out through Megan Jones. And if he's all right I *should* like you and him to come to a definite understanding about the partnership at any rate before Sarah's birthday. That's three weeks to-day, Steve. She'll be twenty-nine on the twenty-fifth.'

'I don't know,' demurred Stephen. 'Sailors are always thinking they want to leave the sea for good, and they seldom settle down proper to make a success of anything else. I've noticed that frequent. They come in with one wave, as it were, and then go out again with the backwash, they don't get no forrarder on land, as a rule.'

'Except when they quits the sea youngish,' retorted Sally. 'Look at Wilson Brent's father.'

There was a pause.

'I'd forgot he was ever at sea,' admitted the father of Sarah Hardyke.

Captain Roberts did not appear again in the shop for a fortnight, but during that interval Stephen received a letter from him stating that he had been obliged to proceed with the *Gwynneth Lloyd* to Southampton, but would be coming over to Carbourne as soon as possible to discuss the little matter of business which had been hinted at already. Meantime he took the liberty of forwarding to Mr. Hardyke certain references, both financial and personal, which he might care to look into.

Stephen handed letter and enclosures to his wife without comment. Mrs. Hardyke, having read both, smiled upon him.

'There!' she said. 'That just corroborates Megan Jones' letter this morning. *She* says his father-in-law, old Mr. Lloyd, was well known and respected in the district and on good terms with Captain Roberts, and that the Captain's wife, though a lot

older than him, seemed quite happy, so Megan's relations in Tenby say, who knew him ever since he came there, only she was such an invalid and kept so much at home. And here's his Bankers' reference, and others in Tenby and Southampton and even in Halifax, Nova Scotia. *He's all right, Steve!*

'I'll tell you what,' said Stephen, 'he's in too much of a hurry, that's what he is. Shoving references at me all in a rush! I'd like him better if he went a bit slower. When a chap's all over you like that, especially when he has a cold-like eye, I don't trust him!'

'You're a stick-in-the-mud!' said Sally with asperity. 'You forgets he's been in America where people acts quick and business-like and don't take a year to make up their minds. . . . His handwriting's a bit like our Bob's, isn't it?'

Stephen scrutinised it afresh.

'Can't say as I see it,' he pronounced, though when Sally produced Bob's last letter, dated three months back at Bilbao, he grudgingly admitted similarity in certain capitals. But Bob's hasty letters were written in an almost illegible scrawl, while the calligraphy of Captain Roberts was a neat and clerkly script. Sally returned the letter from Bilbao to the box where she kept all Bob's letters, thirty-odd, the scanty and almost news-less fruit of twelve years, and sighed. During the last five years they had been chiefly addressed from European ports, but never once had their son suggested visiting his parents.

'Well,' she said as she turned the key, 'there's no harm done by taking up his references, is there? Though I don't think we need bother about the firm in Nova Scotia.'

At the second week-end the Captain reappeared with a companion, a dark-eyed sunburnt middle-aged Welshman with white teeth and a ready smile, whom he introduced as Rees Lloyd, his brother-in-law. Captain Lloyd had come down to Southampton at his, Captain Roberts', urgent request. The Inquiry had exonerated the *Gwynneth Lloyd* and her captain from all blame for the collision, and her repairs were fast being completed. Rees was taking her back to Tenby at the mid-week and he would follow anon after finishing certain business in Southampton, and, he hoped, with Mr. Hardyke. He had set his heart on settling in Carbourne and intended completing the transfer of his share in the *Gwynneth* as soon as he returned to Tenby. Captain Lloyd

had to go back to Southampton that evening, but he himself intended putting up at the 'Prince of Wales' in Old Carbourne over the week-end.

'You'll do nothing of the sort,' said Sally with decision. 'I've been hearing a lot about you from my friend Miss Megan Jones of Saint Florence. We've mutual friends, it seems, so you'll come and stay with us.'

Week-ends, in a tobacconist's shop, are busy. Until closing time on Saturday Captain Roberts acted as assistant alternately to Stephen and Sarah, and proved quick and efficient. On Sunday afternoon he took Sarah for a walk along the cliffs and stimulated her somewhat laggard imagination with anecdotes of foreign lands. They encountered Lily walking with Wilson Brent, and Sarah introduced the Captain a trifle self-consciously. Lily was very animated, but it struck Sarah that Wilson Brent seemed sulky and that they had tiffed. Lily very decidedly smiled upon Captain Roberts, but Sarah, developing limpet-like qualities, clung to her swain's side and refused to be dislodged, even though Wilson Brent exhibited a wish to detach her and actually walk with her himself. It was almost as though Wilson wanted to shuffle Lily off to the sailor. Well, all Lily's affairs seemed to end like that. She could attract men but she never kept them thought Sarah, not without gratification.

The walk developed into a somewhat awkward peregrination four abreast. On their return Wilson excused himself on the score of a previous engagement and Lily invited herself to tea with the Hardykes. Sarah noticed that she had discarded her engagement ring and experienced a pang of fear, but the Captain, with extreme tact, contrived to sit next Sarah herself at the table, and Sarah, to her own surprise, discovered herself talking with ease and animation in his company. Her heart stirred towards him. Somehow he set her spirit at liberty, though she could not think why. She seemed to interest him much more than she had ever managed to interest Wilson, and that without effort. Elation seized her. Oh, in the right company she too could sparkle! If she had this man with her always she would be a new creature! She might be a little lame but even their step fitted when walking together, big man though he was.

On Monday he went over to Southampton for the day and concluded his business there, returning in the evening to Hardyke hospitality. Even Stephen, slow of enthusiasm, had come to

admit the fellow's attraction and his bona fides. His references were above reproach. His relative in Southampton, he said, was long dead, but the names given by his guarantors in that town were substantial and reliable. He had traded back and forth there ever since his marriage. He had made money on his own before. Success seemed to have come to him astonishingly young, but it was all true. He had no living relations and he seemed genuinely determined to quit the sea. Also he understood a smattering of the business already. Stephen mentally circled round and round the immaculate man dumbly desirous of picking holes in his perfection, but could find no flaw. And the business belonged to Sally and Sarah after all; he, Stephen, had really no voice in whatever those two decided upon.

Stephen felt a little sore about it. Sarah talked as though all depended upon his coming to a business understanding with Captain Roberts, yet the actual signing of documents would be done by Sally and their daughter. At most Sarah's father would be a mere witness. Perhaps he ought to have consented to take that partnership years ago and so have endowed himself with genuine authority. This man Roberts was interesting, travelled, elderly for his age but not dull, a good match and quite openly drawn to Sarah, and yet . . . and yet. . . . In Stephen's mind he opened up a deep well of unease. 'He has sea-gull's eyes, although they're so blue,' thought Stephen. 'Bob's were the same, only greyer, and them eyes always goes with a bit of cruelty. He's too like Bob, though I says it of my own boy. Sally finds that an attraction, but I don't. I wonder Sarah don't see it. She did used almost to hate Bob, and I can't blame her. He was always pulling her leg and doing it unkind. Funny how human beings run in types. You notices that, serving in a shop and seeing so many go in and out.'

Thus ruminated Stephen Hardyke, dressing for breakfast on the morning of Sarah's twenty-ninth birthday.

The day chanced to be once again Sunday, a clear mild November day, with only a light wind. Already Roberts had almost assumed the rôle of son of the house. At the breakfast table two small packages from her mother and father lay beside Sarah's plate, but the Captain intimated that he too had a present for her which he would give her that afternoon if she would be kind enough to take him for another stroll; a proposition to which the girl assented cheerfully while Sally sought her husband's evasive eye.

The path chosen by Sarah for the afternoon's walk was a secluded one, running embowered by brambles and wild shrubbery along the brow of the cliff. During the summer many couples wandered along it on Sundays, but to-day it was deserted, such walkers as there were abroad preferring the easier route of the esplanade and its complement, the sea-walk. A couple of miles from the town Sarah with her companion seemed to have the whole world of down, cliff and shore to themselves. Carbourne did not indulge in a winter season, and at this distance even the notes of the Salvation Army band down in the heart of the High Street were lost in the heavy pounding wash of sullen waves. There was a wooden seat here, cunningly set in an armchair of shrubbery facing the sea, perilously near the cliff's crumbling edge where a railing had subsided and hung unsupported since the autumn gales. The sea-walk below had come to an end long since and here the Channel bit deep into the cliff, with, at this moment, only a narrow strand of wet shingle between the cliff-foot and the sea.

The man and girl sat down here. Both, for the last few minutes, had been silent.

'And now, Miss Hardyke,' said Captain Roberts, smiling the odd half-hidden smile which fascinated her, 'if you'll be good enough to shut your eyes while I count ten and then open 'em you'll find my little present in your lap.'

Sarah, blushing deeply, obeyed. She closed her eyes tightly, like a child.

When she opened them again a picture-postcard lay upon her knee; the highly-coloured likeness of a cross-Channel passenger, sea-sick, forget-me-not encircled, inscribed 'Many Happy Returns' in flourishing printed script and below that, in a familiar scrawl, 'From your loving Brother Bob.' Captain Roberts was leaning back against the rail of the seat, shaken with silent laughter which became a roar of mirth as he saw her startled face.

'Oh my God!' he said. 'And to think that none of you three spotted me! And me own sister making eyes at me! Me own mother, even, took in and thinking she'd hooked a son-in-law in her own son! I'd never have believed it possible! Oh Lord!' He smote a hand on either knee and rocked afresh.

The girl had gripped the card with a left hand that shook. She stared at him large-eyed, her cheeks grey. Her right hand closed quiveringly over the handle of the walking-stick which her lameness necessitated on a country walk.

'I took my Christian name for a Surname after I went to sea,' said 'Captain Roberts,' wiping his eyes. 'Found it more convenient to be known as Bob Roberts. Married in that name and all, and got so used to it it's downright difficult to believe I'm a Hardyke. But I am. And I'd made up my mind to come home and settle down to the business after all afore the *Gwynneth Lloyd* was run down. When I came into the shop that afternoon and asked Dad for a half-pound of Extra Honeybright that was just a test to see if he'd recognise me. When he didn't I went on and tried you, and you never spotted who I was. So then it struck me it'd be a bit of a joke to see if I could go down with my own family as a stranger well enough to be took on as partner. Mind you, as you knows you're only an honorary partner with Mother, Sarah. According to the Deed you're just holding it in my place for ten year from the day it was drawn up. If I didn't care to come home and take it on before then it was to be yours for life. But grand-dad only died nine years ago, so I'm just in time.' He chuckled afresh, then took her by the arm and shook her amiably. 'Never mind, old girl!' he said consolingly. 'I'll let you stop in too. You and me'll work together. Mother means to retire with Dad, and grow tomatoes. And I'm not in a hurry to marry again . . . unless that Lily friend of yours 'll look my way. Then p'raps I might. She's chucked young Brent. And he never recognised me! Lord, and the times him and me milled as boys! Come on! Let's get home. I want to see their faces when we tell 'em the truth, but I had to get a last bit o' fun out of you first!'

Sarah replied not a word. Her eyes stared at him, caverns of darkness in her heavy face. Slowly she rose to her feet and he followed suit, his laughter dying.

'Here!' he said harshly. 'It was only a joke, Sarah!'

Her right hand shifted down from the heavy horn handle of her stick. She swung it up upward suddenly by the shaft and struck the side of his forehead a sharp cracking blow. He staggered, leant for the fraction of a second against the sagging wooden rail at the cliff-top, and then, as it broke away, vanished like a giant marionette. There was something inhuman about the unconscious limpness of that great body as it fell.

Sarah gasped, fighting for breath. Then she cried out, but her cry faded feebly in her throat. She crept to the cliff-edge and peered over, and her heart seemed to be stilled, too sick to beat.

Below on the merciless shingle lay the Captain's body, face down, spread-eagled, head twisted at an angle expressive of a broken neck. And the short scrambling figure of a man was running toward it from the dwindled trail of the sea-road, the figure of Stephen Hardyke.

There was a path down the chalky cliff a little way further on, a broken treacherous track unfit for the able-bodied, but Sarah took it. Gasping, torn, chalk-stained, yet still retaining her stick she reached the shore and stood beside her father. He had turned the body over and was gazing helplessly at the battered face which had struck the stones, but at her descent he moved hastily between her and it.

'Sarah!' he cried. 'My girl! My poor girl!' He caught her. 'How did it happen?' he asked. She pushed him away. Her breath came in sobbing gasps as her fingers fumbled with the pocket of her torn winter coat and then she thrust into his hand a crumpled birthday card.

'It's . . . Bob . . . ' she said. 'He gave me—that! Wilson Brent came after me yesterday . . . proposed . . . and I refused him because of *him* . . . and he was Bob, all the time!'

Her father took the card, glanced at it, and dropped again to his knees beside the body. She gave one look at the face he was hastily covering with his own large clean silk Sunday handkerchief and then drew away and sank down on the shingle, her own face bowed on her knees, shaking, sobbing, speechless, a little way off. Pebbles crunched against each other as the kneeling man turned and almost crawled to her side like a wounded thing. They clutched each other.

'My girl, my girl!' said Stephen Hardyke.

'Dad! Oh Dad!'

Stephen's short strong arms tightened about his daughter. Then he released her, and, looking up, she saw that he had drawn out his note-case from an inner pocket, and had placed the birthday-card inside it. He returned the case to his pocket and stood up.

'I saw what happened,' he said shakily. 'Captain Roberts leant against the railing . . . and it broke, and let him through. Couldn't 'a saved himself. And he's Captain Robert Roberts of Tenby, girl. Everyone knows him to be that and no one else. Understand, Sarah? He's *no one else*!'

Still battling with hysteria and faintness she continued to

look up at him. 'You're not to say as he's anyone else,' said Stephen slowly, as though driving home a lesson to a child.

'He's dead!' she cried, hysterically. And then she understood.

'We'll have to call the coast-guard,' said Stephen Hardyke quietly.

'Dad!' she said swiftly, 'I k——'

His fingers, firm and trembling, closed her lips.

'You are my right hand, Sarah,' he said.

Stephen Hardyke has not retired and grown tomatoes. He is still to be found behind the tobacco-counter, selling Navy Cut and occasionally Extra Honeybright and listening to the inrush and backwash of the sea. Miss Hardyke, plainer and lamer and more silent than ever, still runs the Subscription Library and the stationery and the sweets. She has stubbornly refused to marry Wilson Brent, who has returned to Lily. They were married this summer and went abroad to Guernsey for their honeymoon. Mrs. Hardyke, a little dimmed and sometimes petulant because Bob has given up writing home, will tell you that Sarah loved that nice Captain Roberts who died so tragically falling over the cliff right before her and left all his money to his brother-in-law. The coroner was very sympathetic at the Inquest and was very gentle to her. Girls like Sarah take things very deep and quiet. She never owned up to it, but there's no moral doubt she loved him, says Sally Hardyke.

Only Sarah, her God, her father, and perhaps the spirit of a cold-hearted man, know better.

A DUTCH SKIPPER WHO FOUGHT AT TRAFALGAR.

BY SIR GEORGE ASTON.

PART I.

By a stroke of good fortune I have recently become the possessor of what, as far as I can discover, is the only copy of a translation into English of the journal of a Dutch skipper who, with some of his crew, was impressed by Blackwood of the *Euryalus* off Cadiz, was transferred to the *Agamemnon* and *Colossus*, and worked on her gun-deck during the Battle of Trafalgar. The translation, in which I have only made a few minor corrections in grammar and phraseology, was sent to me as a gift by Captain Dirk Verwey of Rotterdam. I am now on the track of the original Dutch document from which the translation was made. Meanwhile it is proved, from abundant internal evidence, checked with journals and logs of H.M. ships, that no doubt can arise about authenticity. The importance of the narrative seems to me to justify its immediate publication, and the story as it stands forms a sea-epic in which truth is stranger than fiction. The skipper and his crew abandoned their vessel in a panic when they were attacked by the boats of a strange craft, believed to be a piratical 'Ture,' but apparently a privateer flying Turkish colours. 'I saw for certain his red flag,' were the actual words entered by the skipper in his journal at the time. The crew took to their boat and they succeeded in reaching a small island off Faro. Half the men remained there. The skipper with the remainder proceeded in a Portuguese fishing-boat to find Nelson's fleet off Cadiz. They went first to one of the British frigates watching the allied fleet in the harbour. They were transferred to Blackwood's *Euryalus* from her, thence to the *Agamemnon* and subsequently to the *Colossus*, before Trafalgar. The journal is unique not only in its neutral origin, but also in the personal touches which give us a lower-deck view of the battle itself and of the tremendous struggle with the elements which followed. We also obtain some interesting side-lights upon the

relationship between the Royal Navy and privateers-men, and upon the procedure of the prize-courts at Gibraltar.

Log of my unhappy voyage to Faro with the hooker 'De Zeevrugt,' commanded by me, Gysbert Jacobze de Reus, of Katwyk on the Sea, living at Maasfluis. Owner: L. Schelvisvanger.

On September 8th, 1805, the above-mentioned gentleman arranged a freight for me to take in a cargo of iron to Rotterdam and back, with fruit for the sum of forty-two hundred guilders. And in case of being the first in with the fruit fifty ducats for me, and if being the second, twenty-five ducats for a premium.

September 16th. In the morning the wind from the S.E. with fine weather. Lay ready off the port of Maasfluis, but we were stopped by the guardship, so that we could not go on, she having orders to press a party of hands out of the fleet lying off Maasfluis; even Mr. Verheul himself was present at this. After having pressed some three men, Mr. Jacobus Steur came on the scene and said, that it was not permissible, that the ships had already been waiting a long time for wind and that the wind now was good, that I carried merchandise on the keel and that he would claim costs and damages for this; after this Mr. Verheul and the commander of the roads let us go at once, besides the pressed men and they cleared us out. And after my going on shore for the watchword, and to say good-bye to my wife and children, we went under sail with the whole fleet at twelve o'clock and were at sea at four o'clock. The wind and weather as before.

VOYAGE FROM MAASFLUIS TO FARO.

Monday, September 17th. In the afternoon at 2 o'clock we passed the Shingles. The wind from the East.

Tuesday, 18th do. At noon we were near the Isle of Wight bearing N.N.W. from us. Distance by guess $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.¹

Wednesday, 19th do. At noon we saw Start-Point distant $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles by guess to the North of us. The wind still as before.

Thursday, 20th do. In the afternoon at 6 o'clock we sighted the Scillys in the N.N.E. by guess 5 miles from us. The wind from the North with a fresh breeze. Shaped our course for the S.S.W., according to the chart, for Finisterre.

Friday, 21st do. Fine weather. The wind N.W. with rain.

Saturday, 22nd do. Weather and wind as before.

Sunday, 23rd do. The wind from the N.E. with a fresh breeze. Guessed ourselves in the latitude $45^{\circ} 3'$. A hazy sky.

¹ Geographical or German miles of 15 to a degree.

Monday, 24th do. Weather and wind as before. Got a trustworthy latitude of $42^{\circ} 41'$. Had Cape Finisterre 7 miles by guess $0\frac{1}{2}$ N. from us and sighted also the same.

Tuesday, 25th do. The wind E.N.E. with a hazy sky.

Wednesday, 26th do. Fine weather with a foggy sky. Sighted a convoy, guessing it to be bound for Lisbon, consisting of four men-o'-war and forty merchantmen, all English. Guessed that we were in latitude $39^{\circ} 58'$.

Thursday, 27th do. In the morning we sighted Cape Roca east of us by guess 6 miles distant, and saw the convoy sail towards Lisbon.

Friday, 28th do. Fine weather. The wind N.E. with a foggy sky. Could not get a latitude. Guessed ourselves to be in latitude $38^{\circ} 20'$. Had Cape Espichel 10 miles E. by N. by guess from us.

Saturday, 29th do. A fresh breeze. The wind from the N.E., and in the evening at 9 o'clock we sighted Cape St. Vincent in the S.E. by guess 7 miles from us.

Sunday, 30th do. At 1 o'clock we passed Cape St Vincent and altered the course to E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. along the shore. The wind from the north with fine weather. And at 10 o'clock in the morning it became calm. The wind from the N.E. Drifted about all day. And saw several turtles, who lay in the sun, with their backs just above the water. And in the evening there came a little breeze from the north. Set our sails, but at 9 o'clock we again got the wind from the east with calms.

October 1st. In the morning we still saw Cape St. Vincent. Drifted here and there and the tides with an easterly wind always run to the west. Fine weather. The wind there being easterly but very weak.

October 2nd. In the morning guessed that we were off Villanova. Sighted several small barks, running out from there, who also were working up the coast, being bound for the small ports on the coast. The wind from the N.E. with fine weather.

October 3rd. In the morning we sighted Cape St. Marie. The wind from the east with a handsome breeze and we could not work up, because the tide ran to the west, for the more breeze there is, the faster the stream runs to the west.

October 4th. Wind and weather as before. Cruised constantly near the shore in the hope that the wind would come northerly. Sighted the white houses of Faro.

October 5th. Wind and weather as before. Could not see that we gained anything in working up, found ourselves to be every time in the same position.

October 6th. In the morning fine weather, but the wind N.N.E., were close in shore. Went then to sail fine along the shore. In

the evening we were only a mile from Faro. The wind light from the N.E.

October 7th. In the morning we lay in with the flag flying for a pilot, but the sea was running too high, so the pilots could not come out. The wind east.

October 8th. In the morning we were close to the bar. But the pilots could not come out. The wind east.

October 9th. In the morning at 4 o'clock we got the pilot for Faro on board. Went about towards the open sea because we were a little to leeward of the entrance. At 8 o'clock we sighted three vessels between us and the shore in the N.E. and the wind easterly. And they ran between us and the shore. But a chebecque being amongst them, the other two being frigates they signalled with a red flag to the chebecque to chase us, for they had already passed us. They looked so black we could not distinguish anything painted on them, nothing but their red flag. When we saw that the chebecque came towards us, we also made sail to get near the shore. Saw also that the frigates had barks belonging to the coast in tow. And we thought them to be Portuguese fishermen, which he had taken before, because there are many fishermen belonging to that port. But as the chebecque came nearer and nearer to us, and fired shot after shot on us with his red Turkish flag flying, our pilot began to cry and to weep and he said to our crew that they were Moors and that we being under the Prussian flag have a permanent war with the Turks. Thus the crew revolting against me, assisted by the pilot, we launched our boat against our will, for the boat of the chebecque and the boats of the frigates, every one with twelve oars, came rowing towards us like mad. And our pilot and our crew did nothing but weep and all went in the boat and asked three times if I would go with them, but I said no, for the boat was so leaky that one man had to bale constantly and the boats and the chebecque were coming very close to us. Thus our crew and our pilot and our mate and boy fled from on board, for my authority was finished and they did not obey me; but having run away ten minutes from the ship, they came back on board with the boat half-full of water, weeping and crying that we now should always be slaves and the pilot also. And the boats approaching and the chebecque firing constantly on us, they hunted for candles and tallow and so made the boat water-tight, having not much time to think about clothes or money; and the shot flying constantly over our ship I thought about my wife and children and expected if I stayed on board to be made a slave for ever, and the crew begged me to go with them, as the boat then was more water-tight. And the cannon-balls now flew over our heads and our topmast-backstay was shot away and because I

saw for certain his red flag, I fled also into the boat; this was at 12 o'clock noon, for our table was set and laid. And so we had to leave our ship, for the pilot swore to the crew that they were Turks, for a month before they had taken four fishermen.

The cannon-balls of the chebecque flew round about our ears, when we left our ship. We were about one mile and a half from the shore, but we all wept at having to leave our ship and property. And the shot from our enemy flew round about us and our boat leaky with our ten on board and but four oars, where with we could row. And the boat of the chebecque, which had ten oars, rowed after us towards the shore and fired shot after shot on us. But by God's grace we got on shore at half-past three. The sea being rather smooth. But in the surf a sea took us up and threw us upside down on the beach, for we either had to go on the beach or fall into the hands of the pirates, thus we could not get a safe harbour, but we stranded not far from the entrance to Faro. We stranded on the islet of St. Marie, upon which is a small battery with sixteen men or so, besides the pest-houses. But now we were wet and cold with neither drink nor food. And the officer of the guard thought that we were from a ship coming out of the Mediterranean, that we had the plague on board, because we arrived there with a boat, and he would give us nothing. They stood ready with guns loaded to shoot us.

By the pilot's lamenting and telling them that last night he was still at the place and went out to our vessel to pilot her in, we got a hearing and then he asked for some water and bread and we got a little jug of wine and water and only a little bread, because they had not much themselves; the pilot had to speak at a distance from them, as far as they could call to each other. And the wine and bread they put down at a distance and then ran away and we went to fetch it. And we hauled our boat as high on the beach as we could and we went in the evening to lie down in the pest-house, wet and cold, on the sand. The wind blew through it and we had no clothes to cover us, nothing but some seaweed washed ashore with high-tide, which lay above high water in moderate weather. This we gathered and wrapped therein our wet bodies, to rest a little, but we could not sleep from the cold, for, if it is lasting fine weather the wind in the evening or even in the afternoon is from seaward and blows mighty cool. And then in the morning the wind blows from shore mighty sultry.

October 10th. In the morning at 5 o'clock we got orders from Faro, for the officer of the battery had sent word direct to Faro, that there was a boat on the beach with ten men, who had to leave their ship on account of the Turks. And when we got orders

we dragged our boat across the island and we launched her in the Faro river and we all went aboard, and rowed with a guard with us to a place where ships have to lie in quarantine. This is about three-quarters of an hour from Faro and the guard who was in another boat went to report our arrival, but we had nothing to eat nor to drink. But Mr. Crispyn my correspondent immediately sent bread, meat and wine, but we had no fire to cook it. And it began to rain; we hauled up the boat and put her on her side against the quarantine pole, but the water rose so high that we stood over our knees in the water, for there is a bank there which is flooded in spring-tides. But about 5 o'clock in the afternoon the gentlemen from Faro came with the *sanité*-boat and asked me for my bill-of-health, which fortunately I took out of the cabin with my ship's-papers before I left. And when the interpreter saw it he told us that it was all well. Then at 5 o'clock we went to Faro with the boat and we were questioned at once about what kind of ship they had been and if they had more ships with them and how they were rigged and if they had fired upon us and if I had seen their Turkish flag and if I could swear on that with my crew and the pilot. And we all said yes, and the pilot did too. Thus they all were sorry about our loss.

October 11th. And in the morning we had to come again under the questioning, me and the pilot, and I said that the pilot began to weep when the chebecque went for us, and that the crew launched the boat against my will. And they answered me that it was better to live in liberty than in perpetual slavery, as Prussia was at war with the Turks and we also, for let the ship be gone, they said, that can be overcome, but to get freed from the Turks is not so easy. But the gentlemen were very kind, but the pilot got much censure because we were three days off the bar 'showing' for a pilot and without getting one.

October 12th. In the morning reported at Mr. Crispyn's and at the English Consul's; they advised me to go to the fleet of Admiral Nelson to inquire if they had not met such a ship taken by the Turks, and that the English Consul would give me a letter of recommendation to hand over to Admiral Nelson, so I took their advice to do this and to hire a fisherman from Faro to go and to inquire at the fleet, and we did so at once and hired the same for 50 Spanish dollars for 11 days to inquire first after the Fleet off Cadiz and then to sail to Gibraltar.

October 13th. In the morning we took water and victuals in the bark, of which three Portuguese sailors intended to go with us, the skipper Anthony and two sailors, and we with our five—I, the mate and three sailors—and the others to stay for the time in Faro.

VOYAGE TO INQUIRE AFTER THE SHIP.

October 14th. In the morning we sailed in the said fishing-boat. The wind from the N.E. with fine weather but could not get to sea, because there was not enough wind. But in the evening at 10 o'clock the wind came from the shore and we got to sea, sad as we were. Shaped our course along-shore. And the breeze increasing, the Portuguese started to grumble, for the wind was from shore with smooth water. Thus I persuaded them, for it was only an open boat with a little fore-deck, under which the Portuguese slept.

October 15th. In the morning we saw two small vessels close in shore. Wind and weather as before. And we had for our breakfast only a piece of dry bread and a glass of wine and water, for we had nothing wherein to cook anything. In the afternoon the wind veered to the northward with fine weather. Passed a number of fishermen but did not see the fleet. Steered then a little more to seaward, but could not find the fleet on that day. Then we went up aloft in case we could see it, but in vain.

October 16th. In the morning we saw several ships cruising off Cadiz. On coming nearer we saw that it was the fleet of frigates watching the French and Spanish fleets in case they came out. About 10 o'clock we went aboard a frigate, and they brought us to the commander, who asked me what I was doing. I said that I fled from my ship off Cape St. Marie on October 9th, because of two frigates and a chebecque, firing under a Turkish flag, and we carrying a Prussian flag, having a perpetual war with the Turks, so we fled, for our liberty. And he said to me that he had boarded 14 days ago an 'Elzereen,' but saw nothing of my ship. And he asked me if I had any proof from Faro. And I said, yes, that I had a letter from the English Consul at Faro to the Admiral Nelson and I let him see. And he put it in a cover and treated me very well. And told me where I had to seek the fleet, in the N.W. from Cadiz, and he gave me my letter back and told me not to give it to anybody if I could not find the fleet, that I in that case had to bring the letter back on board. So at 2 o'clock in the afternoon we went round from on board her and we shaped our course again for the N.W. But in the evening it began to blow so hard, that we had to lower our mainmast and took in all the reefs in the foresail. The wind from the east. And the Portuguese would not go farther to seaward. They cursed us because we sailed out so far to sea and they wanted to go to a Spanish port. And I said that we had better return to the frigate as I had to give back the letter. So we passed an anxious night in that open boat. And the sea was pretty lively, so all hands were despairing for if the weather had stayed at this, unless it moderated, we should have been driven

from the shore. But God moderated the weather to our luck, and the wind was northerly.

October 17th. In the morning we saw neither fleet nor ships, it was thick from rain. But at 12 o'clock it cleared up and the sun shone. Still saw no ships. But about 3 o'clock we saw the same fleet again which we had left. And, the wind increasing, we came at 6 o'clock to the fleet. And the Captain having received orders from the flagship to press me and my crew and to bring us on board of the 'Euryalus'¹ with all the clothes which we have still left, and to send the fishing-boat away, not to sail into Spain, or we should burn her. In the evening it began to blow stiff, so we took two reefs in the topsails. The wind from the E.S.E.

The Captain, on whose ship we were, and the officers deplored our bad luck, of which Captain Blackwood said that as soon as a ship went to the fleet he would send us in her to speak to Admiral Nelson himself and to ask him if he had met such a ship, a single-masted hooker.

October 18th. In the morning we lay with six frigates with our courses clewed up off the bay of Cadiz and the captains paid each other visits. Fine weather, the wind N.N.E. And in the evening we ran some distance to seaward. We had splendid food and drink on board, we had our wine and grog just the same as the crew and we slept between-decks on the sails. And I was given a hammock with the officers and ate and drank with them.

October 19th. In the morning we noticed a big ship, coming from the grand fleet, which lay off Cape St. Marie. Signalled each other, and we ran towards her. Coming near her our captain went in the sloop on board of her and he stayed there for a couple of hours. And then our captain and the captain of the 74 came on board and supped together. And in the evening at about 8 o'clock he sent us on board of that ship called the 'Colossus,' Captain Edward Berney (*sic*). But we stood there, on that big ship's half-deck, like criminals. And when the captain came on board he asked us what country-men we were. And we said Prussians. 'Dutchmen,' he said, but left us standing till 10 o'clock; then he gave orders that we could go below, although I met an officer, who said, 'You can eat, drink and sleep with us,' because I was a captain.

[Here it is desirable to insert a note on a point not definitely determined from historical sources. Information in the Public Record Office proves that the writer and his men were sent in the first instance from the *Euryalus* (Blackwood) to the *Agamemnon*

¹ Corroborated by an entry in the muster-book of the *Euryalus*, which gives the names of the Master, mate, and three seamen (Public Record Office).

(Sir Edward Berry, 64 guns). They seem to have been on board her on the next day, as the incidents of the brig and of the loss of the main topmast are also mentioned in her Master's log. At what time the transfer to the *Colossus* (Captain J. N. Morris, 74 guns) took place is not clear, but the accounts of the action itself and of subsequent incidents appear to have been written from her. (*Great Sea Fights*, Navy Records Society, pp. 266, 301.) The dates, counted from noon to noon as was the practice at sea in 1805, have been left unaltered.]

October 20th. Being present early in the morning, I repeated my case, how I came there on board, as I came looking for my ship, that we fled from the Turc, because the Prussians were perpetually at war with them. And that Captain Blackwood had pressed us out of the fishing-boat. Then the officers asked if I had any proof of this, and I said yes, that I had a letter from the English Consul at Faro, which the captain had in his possession, to give to the Admiral Nelson. Then the officers pitied us and asked if I had any clean clothes. And I said no, that we had nothing but what was on our bodies. Then the captain-lieutenant went and fetched me a shirt and a frock and a pair of stockings and he said I must don them at once. And I donned the clean shirt and gave the dirty one to my crew. And the frock with anchor-buttons also, then I looked nearly like an English officer. And I lodged with them and they gave me a hammock with everything belonging to it, and they did me very well. I walked on the half-deck and assisted with the signalling, and our crew did so too, but they had only sails to sleep on. And they got all the same, what the crew used to get.

October 21st. In the morning calmly. Saw several turtles. And having launched the boat, they went to see if they could catch any, of which they caught three. And in the afternoon, having got a little breeze, we sighted a brig to seaward from us, which our captain went to chase. And made all sail, which could do any good, and in the evening we came near her. She was an American brig, coming out of the Spanish West Indies, with sugar and coffee and indigo, bound for a Spanish port. Took the captain and three sailors out of her and put a prize-master in her and took her in tow. But about 4 o'clock we heard to leeward of us every five minutes a shot. It was thick from rain and we came before the wind running towards the sound with studding-sails set. So at 5 o'clock it cleared up again. Saw a whole fleet before the wind from us. Did signal but got no answer. But another English frigate, being to windward of the fleet, signalled to us that it was

the fleet from Cadiz. The French and Spaniards. Then we hove-to took in the studding-sails, and the captain ordered the captain of the American brig to be put on board his brig and the prize-master and the crew to be taken from her. I thought, he surely will put us also with my crew on the brig, but no. He said that Prussia was at war with France, and that I was no better than himself; that I had to fight for my King and country, and that I would be near him on the quarter-deck. What could I do? I said, it is well, Mister Commander. And your crew will be 'tweendecks. I was a pressed man; I had said that we were Prussians. Thus I looked on at that fine work, clearing ship for action and putting rings of rope in which the balls had to lie and those rings were strewn round about full of cannon-balls. And we sent every five minutes a shot to windward with a 36-pounder, which went through my soul. And the hammocks were in the nettings on the side of the bulwarks and everything which was in the way simply went over-the-side. Thus we passed the whole night bringing up cannon-balls and-so-on.

(To be continued.)

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 74.

'Hail to thee, Thane of ——!'

'Hail to thee, Thane of ——!'

1. 'When descends on the Atlantic

The ——

Storm-wind of the equinox,

Landward in his wrath he scourges

The toiling surges.'

2. 'The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the ——.'
 3. 'I shot an —— into the air,
 It fell to earth, I knew not where.'
 4. 'Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.'
 5. 'But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
 For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.'
 6. 'A —— and a wiser man,
 He rose the morrow morn.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page x of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue; and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 74 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than October 21. No answers will be opened before this date.

ANSWER TO No. 73.

1. F	re	T
2. I	no	H
3. F	ai	R
4. T	id	E
5. Y	ul	E

PROEM: *The Revenge.*

LIGHTS:

1. *The Brook.*
2. *Idylls of the King. Guinevere.*
3. *A Dream of Fair Women.*
4. *Crossing the Bar.*
5. *In Memoriam, xxviii.*

Acrostic No. 72 ('Caviare General'): The prizes are won by Mr. E. E. Wells, 10 Brodric Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.17; and Mrs. Westendarp, 11 Drummond Place, Edinburgh.

